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Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for 2017

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated to ensure international protection to refugees and others of concern to the Office of the High Commissioner and to seek permanent solutions to their problems in cooperation with States and other organizations, including through the provision of humanitarian assistance. The present report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) evaluates the role of UNHCR in the registration of refugees and asylum seekers from 2012 to 2016.

Registration responsibilities ultimately reside with the country where refuge or asylum is sought. Within this context, the registration role of UNHCR varies widely: in some countries, the host Government undertakes registration alone; in others, UNHCR supports host Governments' registration work in a variety of ways; and in still others, UNHCR leads the registration process.

In seeking to adapt to a wide range of contexts and challenges and "leave no one behind", UNHCR has played a relevant and, in many cases, crucial role in the registration of an unprecedented number of refugees and asylum seekers. For those who have received assistance, protection and durable solutions, registration has often been essential to the realization of these outcomes. In those settings where registration has been highly effective in achieving swift and comprehensive registration of refugees and asylum seekers, and in contributing to broader UNHCR programmatic objectives, it has harnessed technology, navigated the complexities and challenges in its environments of operation and deliberately capitalized on registration data as an input into programmatic decision-making.

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At the same time, UNHCR has struggled to ensure that resources keep pace with the heightened importance of, and increased demand for, registration. In some operations, the Office of the High Commissioner has created efficiencies to help it partially address this challenge. In other cases, this struggle has put persons of concern at increased risk of human rights violations.

Looking to the future, UNHCR, along with host countries, will be confronted with renewed challenges, many of which are pointed out in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In particular, UNHCR will continue to confront the inherent tension between, on one hand, the potential benefits that may accrue from widespread data sharing and a heightened operational role of Governments in registration, and, on the other, the risks that such measures may entail with regard to the protection of individuals.

OIOS makes five important recommendations, namely, that UNHCR:

- Update the 2003 Handbook for Registration, complete the Identity Management Quality Initiative specifications and strengthen the progressive implementation of its personal data protection policy for persons of concern
- Identify root causes and implications of low registration coverage in individual countries, and identify country operations where enhanced advocacy efforts are needed to ensure that the human rights of all persons of concern are protected in government-led registration processes
- Accelerate finalization and roll-out of proGres v4
- Identify, with partners, which registration data elements most enhance shared efforts to meet needs of persons of concern and develop pertinent indicators
- Increase the number of operations reporting under registration-related objectives

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I. Introduction and objective

1. The Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS-IED) identified the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for evaluation on the basis of a risk assessment designed to identify Secretariat programme evaluation priorities. The Committee for Programme and Coordination selected the evaluation of UNHCR for consideration at its fifty-seventh session in June 2017.[1] This was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/8.

2. The general frame of reference for the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is provided in General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B, 54/244 and 59/272, as well as Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/273, by which OIOS is authorized to initiate, carry out and report on any action that it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities. OIOS evaluation is stipulated in the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.[2]

3. The overall evaluation objective was to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of UNHCR in fulfilling its role in the registration of refugees and asylum seekers in the period from 2012 to 2016.[3] This topic emerged during a scoping phase described in the evaluation inception paper.[4] The evaluation was conducted in conformity with the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system, as issued by the United Nations Evaluation Group.

4. The comments of UNHCR management were sought on the draft report and taken into account in the final report. The formal UNHCR response is included in annex I to the present report.

II. Background

A. Mandate

5. The objective of UNHCR is to ensure international protection to refugees and others of concern and to seek permanent solutions to their problems in cooperation with States and other organizations, including through the provision of humanitarian assistance.[5] The primary instruments governing the rights of refugees and the legal framework underpinning the work of UNHCR are the statute of the Office of the

[1] See report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its fifty-fifth session (A/70/16), para. 108.

[2] ST/SGB/2016/8, regulation 7.1.

[3] The UNHCR mandate also includes stateless people and, within a joint inter-agency approach, internally displaced persons.

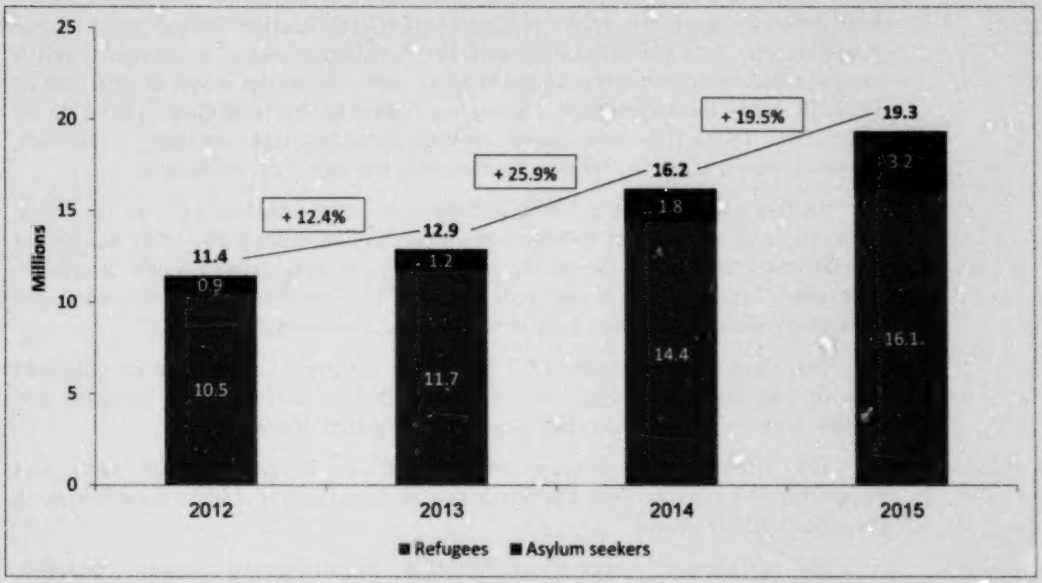
[4] Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), inception paper (IED-16-013), 3 August 2016.

[5] Biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2016-2017 (A/69/6/Rev.1), para. 21.1.

High Commissioner, the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto and, where relevant, regional instruments.[6]

6. According to the UNHCR Global Appeal 2017 Update, in 2015, persons of concern to UNHCR numbered 63.9 million, a figure 16.3 per cent greater than that in 2014.[7] Of these, the number of refugees and asylum seekers in 2015 totalled 19.3 million, a figure 19.5 per cent greater than that in 2014. Figure I illustrates this trend.[8]

Figure I
Number of refugees and asylum seekers, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015



Source: UNHCR population statistics, UNHCR Global Appeal 2017 Update, as synthesized by OIOS.

7. UNHCR operational objectives for persons of concern are organized under six groups of goals/rights:

(a) Favourable protection environment;

(b) Fair protection process and documentation;

(c) Security from violence and exploitation;

(d) Basic needs and services;

(e) Community empowerment and self-reliance;

[6] Other instruments include international human rights law; conclusion No. 91 (LII) of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on registration of refugees and asylum-seekers; and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (General Assembly resolution 71/1).

[7] The number of persons of concern at end 2016 totalled 70.1 million (UNHCR Global Focus, 13 January 2017).

[8] Final 2016 figures are pending.

(f) Durable solutions.[9]

Registration activities fall under goal (b). However, registration is often an important foundation for achieving effectiveness, efficiency and relevance in respect of the remaining goals (see result B).

Role of UNHCR in registration

8. Depending on the applicable legal framework, registration responsibilities ultimately reside with the country where refuge or asylum is sought.[10] Within this context, the role of UNHCR in registration varies considerably, depending on the host country's approach to the fulfilment of its registration obligations. In some countries, the host Government undertakes registration alone. In others, UNHCR supports the host Government's registration work in various ways. In still others, UNHCR leads the registration process on behalf of the host Government. In its evaluation, OIOS-IED took these various scenarios into account; it did not, however, assess scenarios where government is the sole registration actor.

9. In this evaluation, the UNHCR definition of registration, as "the recording, verifying, and updating of information on persons of concern to UNHCR with the aim of protecting and documenting them and of implementing durable solutions", was used.[11] OIOS-IED accordingly framed its relevance-, effectiveness- and efficiency-related evaluation questions under the following criteria:

(a) Relevance: success of UNHCR in aligning its registration role and specific registration activities to the needs of host Governments, refugees and asylum seekers, and partners, and to broader normative frameworks;[12]

(b) Effectiveness: success of UNHCR in helping achieve swift and comprehensive registration of refugees and asylum seekers, and in contributing to the other UNHCR goals;[13]

(c) Efficiency: success of UNHCR in harnessing human, material, technological and financial resources and other inputs to achieve registration-related objectives.

Results A, B and C below cover relevance, effectiveness and efficiency issues, respectively, while result D covers all three areas.

B. Structure and leadership

10. UNHCR is headed by the High Commissioner, who is supported by a Deputy High Commissioner and two Assistant High Commissioners; and is governed by the

[9] Biennial programme budget 2016-2017 of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: report by the High Commissioner (A/AC.96/1147).

[10] See chap. V (Administrative measures) of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees; and citations in footnote 12.

[11] UNHCR Handbook for Registration (September 2003), p. 6, para. 1.1.

[12] Including international refugee law, international human rights law, international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles, and frameworks of cross-cutting issues (e.g., gender).

[13] OIOS-IED did not undertake an impact assessment; instead, it culled examples of unintended consequences.

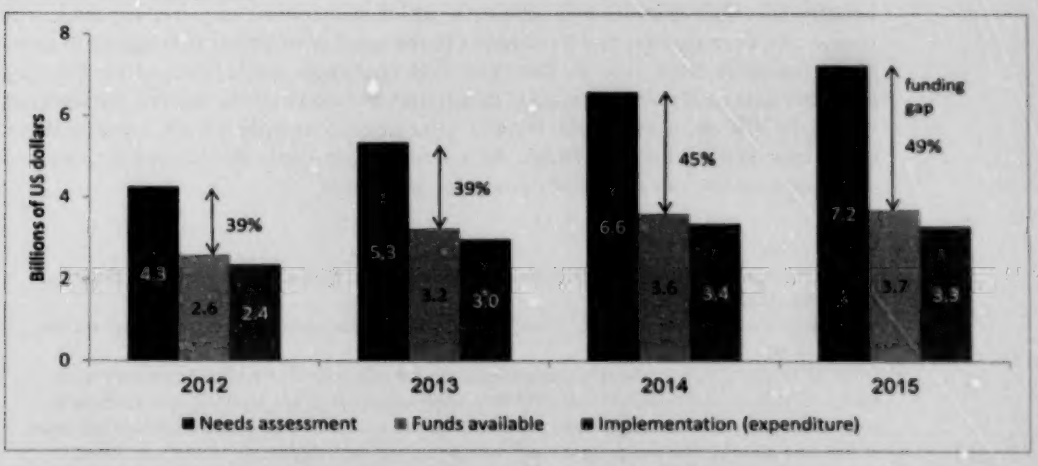
General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and reports annually to both. The Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which comprises 98 member States, meets regularly. The Executive Committee approves UNHCR programmes and budgets and performs an advisory function.

11. The Executive Office and seven divisions constitute the main office and divisions of UNHCR. UNHCR also encompasses five regional bureaux. At headquarters, registration is the responsibility of the Identity Management and Registration Section within the Division of Programme Support and Management. The Identity Management and Registration Section maintains technical and substantive links, especially with the Field Information and Coordination Support Section and the Division of International Protection. Country-level registration staff receive guidance from the Identity Management and Registration Section and from regional registration officers.

C. Resources

12. A large proportion of UNHCR resources comes from voluntary contributions (extrabudgetary sources), while a far smaller proportion is derived from the United Nations regular budget, the figures being 98.6 per cent versus 1.4 per cent, respectively, on average, from 2012 to 2015.[14] As shown in Figure II, while UNHCR approved budgets grew steadily over this period, so, too, did the size of its funding gaps.

Figure II
Needs, funds available and expenditure, 2012-2015
(Billions of United States dollars)



Sources: 2012-2014 figures: UNHCR biennial programme budget 2016-2017 (A/AC.96/1147); 2015 figures: UNHCR Global Report 2015.
Note: 2016 figures not yet available.

[14] Final 2016 figures pending.

III. Methodology

13. The evaluation used a mixed-method approach featuring the following data sources:

(a) Interviews and focus group discussions at UNHCR headquarters (Geneva and Copenhagen): 52 staff, six partners;

(b) Structured document reviews: 29 memorandums of understanding, standard operating procedures and data-sharing agreements, country registration strategies and over 45 additional documents (e.g., evaluations, audits, guidance documents and legal instruments);

(c) Secondary analysis of monitoring and programme data: UNHCR Global Focus Insight[15] and Managing Systems, Resources and People (MSRP)[16] systems;

(d) Web-based survey: 167 registration field staff representing 75 UNHCR country operations;[17]

(e) Direct observation: six observations of registration facilities, verification exercises and related activities;

(f) Case studies: four in-depth country case studies entailing on-site data collection (Jordan and Kenya) and remote data collection (Ecuador and Malaysia), including location-specific interviews and focus groups, desk reviews, disaggregated survey analysis; and eight case studies entailing a smaller set of desk-based reviews.[18]

14. The evaluation encountered three main limitations: inconsistent or incomplete UNHCR monitoring and performance data,[19] which limited year-on-year trend analysis and cross-country comparisons; a lack of organized and comprehensive country-specific registration-related data, which reduced the universe for document review and case studies; and a reduction in the number of physical missions to case-study countries from four to two. The first challenge was addressed by filtering available data to discard anomalous data points and outliers; the second, by working with UNHCR to obtain data from a convenience sample of 69 representative operations; and the third challenge, by undertaking in-depth desk-based reviews and interviews for the two case-study countries not visited.

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[15] Global Focus Insight aggregates performance information into dashboard views and generates field- and global-level reports.

[16] Managing Systems, Resources and People is the UNHCR enterprise resource planning system.

[17] Response rate of 54.5 per cent.

[18] OIOS-IED used a data exploration technique ("cluster analysis"), with significant assistance from UNHCR, to systematically identify case-study countries. Each selected case study falls within one of the four clusters, distinguished from one another based on the variables indicated in footnote 20. The additional eight case studies focused on Bangladesh, Cameroon, Chad, Lebanon, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania.

[19] Beginning with a 2007 inspection report on UNHCR results-based management systems (INS-07-005), followed by a series of evaluations (E/AC.51/2013/5, E/AC.51/2015/5 and IED-16-001), OIOS highlighted the inadequacy of UNHCR monitoring systems for generating valid, reliable data as a means of developing and implementing programmes in a more evidence-based, data-driven manner. As the Global Focus Insight data constitute the only official source of UNHCR programme data, OIOS had to rely on this source, while fully factoring in limitations.

IV. Evaluation results

A. In seeking to adapt to a wide variety of country contexts and challenges, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has played a relevant and, in many cases, crucial role in the registration of an unprecedented number of refugees and asylum seekers

UNHCR has sought to align its registration role with Governments across a variety of contexts

15. Pursuant to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the country where refuge or asylum is sought is ultimately responsible for registration. Within this framework, UNHCR has adapted its registration role to a wide variety of country contexts.[20]

16. Within these various contexts, UNHCR and host Governments sometimes seek to formally establish their respective registration roles and responsibilities. However, document review revealed that the demarcation of registration roles was not always clear, as many memorandums of understanding were outdated or vague — or even silent — on registration issues. In addition, while some documents on standard operating procedures were highly detailed, they typically covered very discrete exercises (e.g., registration of a certain group or a specific process such as verification), instead of delineating the concrete nature of the operational relationship between UNHCR and host Governments. Sentiment of refugees and asylum seekers in the two case-study countries reflected divergent perspectives: in one country, they reported the respective roles of UNHCR and the host Government and the specific process for obtaining documentation and/or protection to be clear; in the other, the opposite was reported.

17. In contrast, the perception of registration officers surveyed was largely positive, with 74 per cent agreeing strongly or somewhat that the assigned distribution of registration tasks between UNHCR and the government was clear and well defined.[21] This sentiment may indicate that a lack of clarity in the demarcation of roles on paper does not necessarily translate into a lack of clarity in practice. In Jordan, UNHCR and the Government reported close collaboration despite a somewhat unclear demarcation of roles in memorandums of understanding and standard operating procedures. This sentiment could also imply that relationships in the registration context are often dynamic, with changes sometimes remaining undocumented. In Ecuador, UNHCR shifted from leading the registration process to providing technical support to the government. In Kenya, the somewhat unclear demarcation of roles on paper was mirrored in a lack of clarity in practice — a conclusion corroborated by UNHCR staff interviewees, government officials and refugees and asylum seekers.

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[20] Cluster analysis revealed a typology of four registration-relevant country profiles, which differed from each other based on variables such as operation size, number of refugees and asylum seekers, likelihood of the occurrence of an emergency operation, use of biometrics, host-country registration capacity, and type of UNHCR registration role.

[21] 46 responses: mean = 3.13, median = 3.00 on a scale where 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree and 1 = strongly disagree.

18. Besides broadly articulating its role in relation to the host Government, UNHCR also sought to align its specific registration activities with concrete needs: this activity-level alignment was especially critical in those contexts where neither UNHCR nor the government assumed sole responsibility for registration, and where, instead, UNHCR supported the government. Analysis of Identity Management and Registration Section data, coupled with case-study analysis, revealed that in those countries where UNHCR supported the host Government in conducting registration, it actively sought to tailor its support to the Government's expressed needs, through, for example, training and capacity-building, and technology and systems (e.g., hardware and/or software) provision. Thus, while its support to host Governments has varied in intensity and scope, UNHCR has nevertheless managed to navigate divergent contexts and demonstrate its relevance by leveraging its expertise on registration, documentation and case management issues.

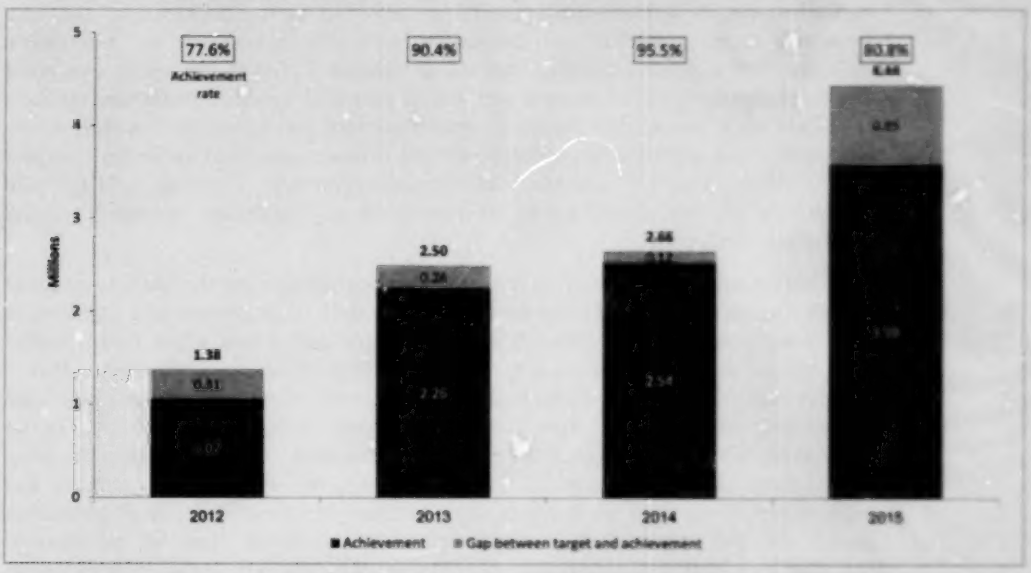
UNHCR has been crucial in registering refugees and asylum seekers and in working to "leave no one behind"

19. Responding to unprecedented displacement levels (see figure III), in 2015 UNHCR registered, or supported host Governments in registering, 41 per cent more refugees and asylum seekers than in 2014 and more than three times as many as in 2012. However, as mentioned in paragraph 43 below, these efforts still fell short of reaching the entire population of refugees and asylum seekers. It was impossible to separate out UNHCR effectiveness from that of host Governments where registration was undertaken jointly; and OIOS-IED documented UNHCR results more definitively in those scenarios where it undertook registration exclusively. In Malaysia, UNHCR reported registering some 150,000 persons of concern by end October 2016, without government assistance or support. In Lebanon, UNHCR had registered some 1.1 million refugees before the Government suspended registration in 2015.[22]

[22] See http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/persons_of_concern.

Figure III

Number of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis with minimum set of data required (achievement, target and achievement rate), across reported profile groups, in millions



Source: OIOS-IED Global Focus Insight analysis.
Note: Outliers and data points without targets or results were excluded. Final 2016 figures are pending.

20. In addition to aiming at meeting registration needs on an overall numerical basis, UNHCR deliberately aligned its work with international legal and normative frameworks related to refugees, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law. Analysis of registration guidance documents[23] confirmed this alignment[24] and that cross-cutting issues of age, gender and diversity were systematically incorporated into UNHCR registration-related guidance documents. Some standard operating procedures (e.g., for Cameroon and Lebanon) demonstrated attention to persons with specific needs.

21. Direct observations demonstrated that UNHCR sought to put these principles into practice through efforts to leave no one behind,[25] that is to say, to reach all in need, regardless of geography or population. In Kenya, UNHCR conducted mobile registration in Mombasa and border patrols in northern Kenya and undertook specific efforts to register and advocate for the most vulnerable and persons with

[23] E.g., UNHCR Emergency Handbook, and its specific chapters on the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum, emergency registration, identifying persons with specific needs, and refugee status determination; Procedural Standards for Refugee Status Determination; and UNHCR Handbook for Registration.

[24] Alignment of guidance documents to normative standards does not necessarily mean that those standards are followed consistently in implementation, which is an issue beyond the scope of the present evaluation.

[25] Pursuant to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and World Humanitarian Summit UNHCR commitments (2016).

specific needs (e.g., unaccompanied children and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons. In Jordan, UNHCR assisted Syrian refugees who were entering the country without documentation, or through informal border crossings, in regularizing their status and becoming documented. In Za'atari camp in Jordan, people with medical conditions recorded during registration, and who were thus unable to collect their assistance, were able to authorize an "alternative collector" of assistance on their behalf. In Kenya, UNHCR has made concerted efforts to register LGBTI persons and record potential cases of sexual and gender-based violence, potentially enabling custom-tailored assistance. In Ecuador, where government-run registration processes did not capture individual vulnerabilities and special needs, UNHCR recorded these issues separately, enabling UNHCR and partners to provide some degree of protection and advocate on behalf of the individuals concerned.

22. Surveyed registration officers were of mixed opinion on the success of these efforts. On the one hand, 83 per cent agreed strongly or somewhat that registration staff were generally knowledgeable about human rights and knew how to treat refugees and asylum seekers in accordance with United Nations norms and values;[26] 78 per cent also agreed strongly or somewhat that registration processes successfully identified the most vulnerable persons with specific needs.[27] On the other hand, fewer staff felt that the registration function was successful in reaching out to those in remote locations.[28] In interviews, the appraisal of refugees and asylum seekers as well as implementing partners on these issues was somewhat mixed. On the other hand, partners did note, positively, that the information collected by UNHCR during registration was often highly relevant in contributing to the timeliness and effectiveness of their own interventions.

B. UNHCR registration work has been essential to the effective delivery of assistance, protection and solutions to those who have received these benefits; at the same time, where registration shortcomings exist, persons of concern have been at increased risk of human rights violations

23. Registration serves as the foundation for achieving the assistance, protection and solutions at the core of the UNHCR mandate, which is to ensure international protection to refugees and others of concern and "to seek permanent solutions to their problems in cooperation with States and other organizations, including through the provision of humanitarian assistance."[29] Figure IV indicates that the broader programmatic purpose of registration is clear to those most directly responsible for registration work.

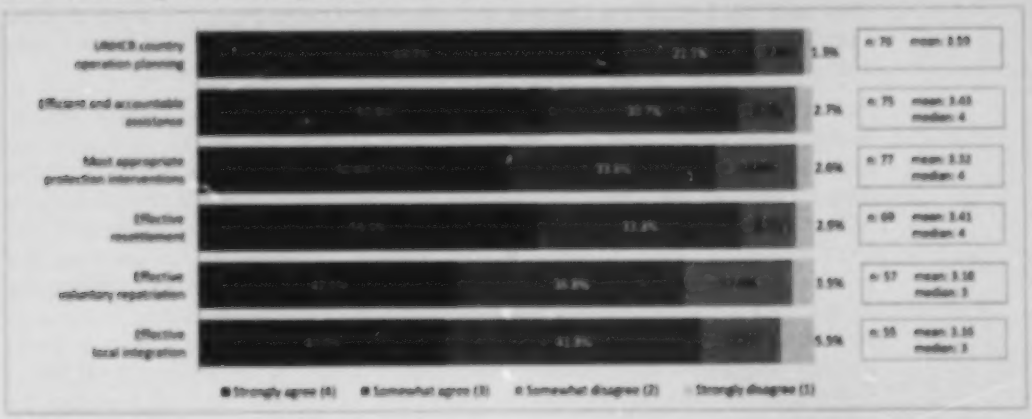
[26] 81 responses: mean = 3.44, median = 4.00, on a scale where 4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree and 1 = strongly disagree.

[27] 46 responses: mean = 3.27, median = 4.00, on the same scale as above.

[28] 28.4 per cent of respondents strongly agree and 39.5 per cent agree somewhat with the statement that "[t]he registration function is able to reach out to refugees and asylum seekers in remote locations", while 28.4 per cent somewhat or strongly disagree.

[29] UNHCR Handbook for Registration (2003), p. 6.

Figure IV
Understanding on the part of registration staff of the UNHCR registration role as contributing to broader programmatic goals


UNHCR country operation planning
Efficient and accountable assistance
Most appropriate protection interventions
Effective resettlement
Effective voluntary repatriation
Effective local integration
n: 70 mean: 3.59
n: 75 mean: 3.63 median: 4
n: 77 mean: 3.52 median: 4
n: 69 mean: 3.41 median: 4
n: 57 mean: 3.16 median: 3
n: 55 mean: 3.16 median: 3
Strongly agree (4)
Somewhat agree (3)
Somewhat disagree (2)
Strongly disagree (1)

Source: Staff survey.

24. Moreover, there is evidence from multiple sources, across various country-level contexts, that registration data have been essential to advancing these broader programmatic goals.

1. Registration contributing to assistance

25. Basic assistance constitutes a core right under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (General Assembly resolution 217 A (III)).[30] In many countries, refugees' receipt of basic assistance — e.g., shelter, cash, water, sanitation and hygiene — was contingent upon registration. In these scenarios, registration efforts directly led to assistance for those who received it.

26. Analysis of other, less clear-cut scenarios provided a more mixed picture: e.g., some did not receive assistance because they were not registered (see result A), some of those registered received assistance and others did not, and some received assistance although it was inadequate. In settings where UNHCR registration work has been highly effective, technology that was well implemented and well supported was an enabling factor (see paras. 49 and 50). In Jordan, iris scans for payment at the supermarket helped improve data accuracy, which in turn resulted in more effective food distribution; and refugees and asylum seekers, as well as key partners, appreciated these advances. Partners in Jordan, Kenya and in several other operations cited online registration applications as having improved their ability to more effectively target and deliver assistance. The main registration application is proGres (the Profile Global Registration System), developed in 2003 and now used in 97 operations. In South Africa, proGres reportedly prevented fraud, as caseworkers could verify case details without having to retrieve physical files.[31]

[30] Article 25.
[31] Global survey of the implementation of UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas, 2012.

27. Technological innovations did not contribute positively to assistance in all settings, however. Document review revealed that, in Western Sahara, although Access, then proGres, applications were used for registration exercises in 2004, 2008 and 2012, data quality and reliability were very poor, requiring constant manual verifications.[32] The combination of this time-consuming verification work and low staff capacity resulted in less-effective provision of assistance.

28. Another frequently cited factor hindering assistance centred on time frames. Refugee and asylum-seeker interviewees, as well as a desk review of evaluations and audits, consistently criticized the long time frames for registration and/or determination of status, and then for receiving assistance. Figure XII provides data indicating the wide variation between registration time frames between 2012 and 2016 across the UNHCR operations that reported. A number of onerous steps and insufficient communication regarding those steps were also cited by interviewees. At the same time, desk review noted numerous efforts that improved effectiveness by addressing long wait times. In Lebanon, wait time was reduced to 2-3 weeks through utilization of a model that enabled UNHCR to quickly establish a registration network in response to the Syrian emergency, barcode scanning for identification of Syrians and the use of online portals. In Malaysia, streamlined refugee status determination guidelines, combined with new scheduling strategies and case-management tools, resulted in the reduction of the average time from first interview to notification of results from 175 days to less than 75.[33] Figure XII data also provide some evidence of a reduction, between 2012 and 2016, in the average number of days required for registration.

2. Registration contributing to protection

29. As rooted in the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,[34] and Additional Protocol I to the four Geneva Conventions, and elsewhere, protection allows people to maintain their rights. Registration plays a key role in protection by helping establish identity, location and legal status in the host country; assisting in obtaining requisite identification papers; assisting in the prevention of refoulement; and identifying specific needs. Examples present a mixed picture of how UNHCR registration has contributed to protection in these ways.

30. Refugee and asylum-seeker interviewees acknowledged that UNHCR registration documents generally facilitated freedom of movement, even in the absence of official residency documents.[35] An analysis of evaluations and audits corroborated this perception, providing examples where registration had proved pivotal, e.g., in Jordan, where registration helped establish identity beyond a doubt, maintain the family unit and prevent trafficking;[36] and South Sudan, where it helped

[32] Ibid.

[33] UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES), "From slow boil to breaking point: a real time evaluation of UNHCR's response to the Syrian refugee emergency" (PDES/2013/10), July 2013; and UNHCR PDES, "But when will our turn come? a review of implementation of UNHCR's urban refugee policy in Malaysia" (PDES/2012/02), May 2012.

[34] Article 44.

[35] Kenya and Jordan focus groups and case-study frameworks.

[36] Independent Programme Evaluation of UNHCR's response to the refugee influx in Lebanon and Jordan (29 January 2015).

achieve broader protection objectives.[37] Here, too, technological advances (e.g., proGres and biometrics) and better-organized processes helped facilitate the registration processes leading to these improved outcomes, in addition to reducing backlogs and the number of "recyclers" and "absent refugees".

31. Evaluations and audits also indicated that insufficient registration information had negatively affected protection. Protracted use of level 1 registration in Lebanon "limited the capacity to identify and address protection needs for many months, especially in instances where refugees were not going to live in camps but were, instead, dispersing across the country".[38] In Malaysia, some individuals faced serious protection risks (e.g., arrest, detention and extortion) and were more reluctant to move around to find work (which resulted in a loss of income needed for survival) as they awaited registration by UNHCR.[39] In Ethiopia, "the way nationality screening was conducted and the suspension of registration, without adequate provision of services at entry points, considerably reduced de facto access to protection and asylum for refugees".[40] In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, "the majority of [persons of concern] without a valid ID document continued to face obstacles in terms of protection from institutional violence and access to basic needs."[41] In interviews, refugees and asylum seekers, government representatives, non-governmental organization partners and UNHCR staff corroborated the significant challenges in this area.

3. Registration contributing to durable solutions[42]

32. Pursuant to the UNHCR mandate, durable solutions for refugees and asylum seekers encompass three primary remedies: integration into the host country, voluntary repatriation to one's country of origin and resettlement in a third country. While resettlement is available to a relatively small proportion of refugees and asylum seekers, it remains an important solution for the many refugees who benefit from it.

33. Representatives of resettlement countries indicated that UNHCR has been highly effective in supporting the collection of registration data which has enabled credible identity verification, which, in turn, has led to successful resettlement referral work by UNHCR. All 10 interviewees from top resettlement countries rated UNHCR positively in this respect.

34. In Jordan, tangible results referenced by interviewees were documented. In 2015, a total of 12,246 persons were referred through the regular resettlement programme. In addition, as part of the Canadian resettlement programme, in late

[37] UNHCR-PDES, "Flooding across the border: a review of UNHCR's response to the Sudanese refugee emergency in South Sudan" (PDES/2013/08), July 2013.

[38] The evaluation acknowledges that "this may have been a necessity", but that "consequences were probably not fully appreciated" (see Independent Programme Evaluation of UNHCR's Response to the refugee influx in Lebanon and Jordan).

[39] "But when will our turn come? a review of implementation of UNHCR's urban refugee policy in Malaysia", 2012. (See footnote 33.) Nearly all Kenya interviewees corroborated this experience.

[40] Evaluation of UNHCR's Response to the L3 South Sudan Refugee Crisis in Uganda and Ethiopia (PDES/2016/01), 2016.

[41] Audit of UNHCR operations in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, September 2016.

[42] OIOS-IED analysis focused primary on resettlement because it was the only durable-solutions area with sufficient data.

2015, UNHCR referred 12,097 persons for resettlement in under two months. Following this success, the programme of the United States of America requested referrals of 9,000 persons for resettlement in a two-month period, a target that was exceeded prior to the deadline.[43] While staff efforts were a factor, another key component was the joint work of the Middle East and North Africa-Jordan office on innovative UNHCR systems which were well suited to this task. For example, building on registration data, AIM software was developed to incorporate 36 filters, which enabled the operation to use data (e.g., proGres and vulnerability data) to identify, then refer, those cases with the highest resettlement potential. In Kenya, government representatives on resettlement reported a positive working relationship with UNHCR, indicating that UNHCR adeptly navigated difficult circumstances to successfully expedite resettlement for urgent protection cases (e.g., women at risk and survivors of violence).

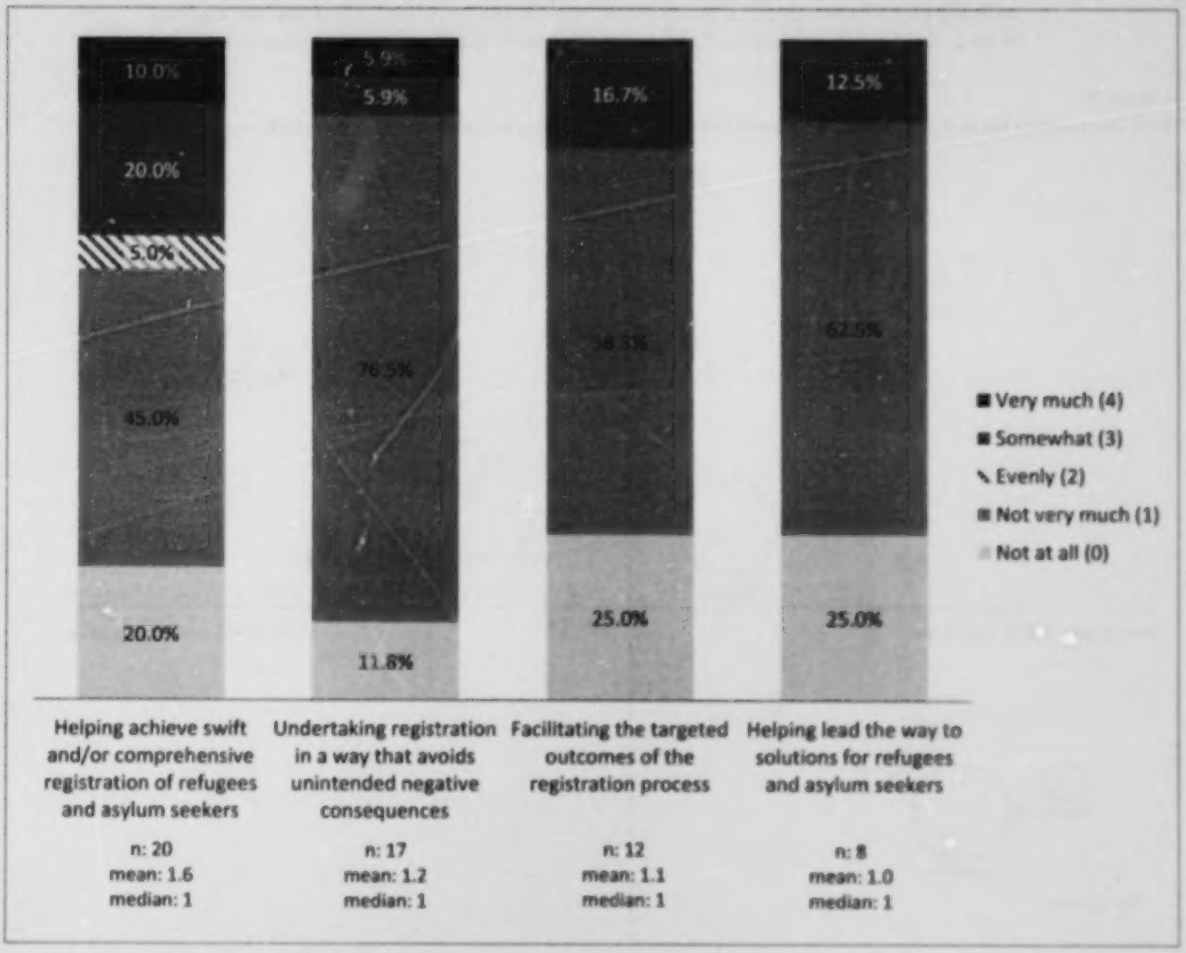
35. Notwithstanding these examples of effectiveness, interviewees also pointed to areas needing further attention: further implementation of innovative technology at the global level (see result C); data security and data-sharing issues (see result D); registration staff levels to support sustained resettlement surge activities (including less reliance on affiliated staff); and strengthened staff training.

Overall registration effectiveness has been somewhat negative to mixed, owing to several key factors

36. In contrast, beyond these specific programmatic areas and at a broader organizational level, an analysis of 27 evaluations and audits determined UNHCR effectiveness on four key dimensions of registration to be somewhat negative (see figure V).

[43] UNHCR, All plan narrative report, planning year 2017.

Figure V
Summary of overall UNHCR registration effectiveness, based on a desk review of evaluations and audits



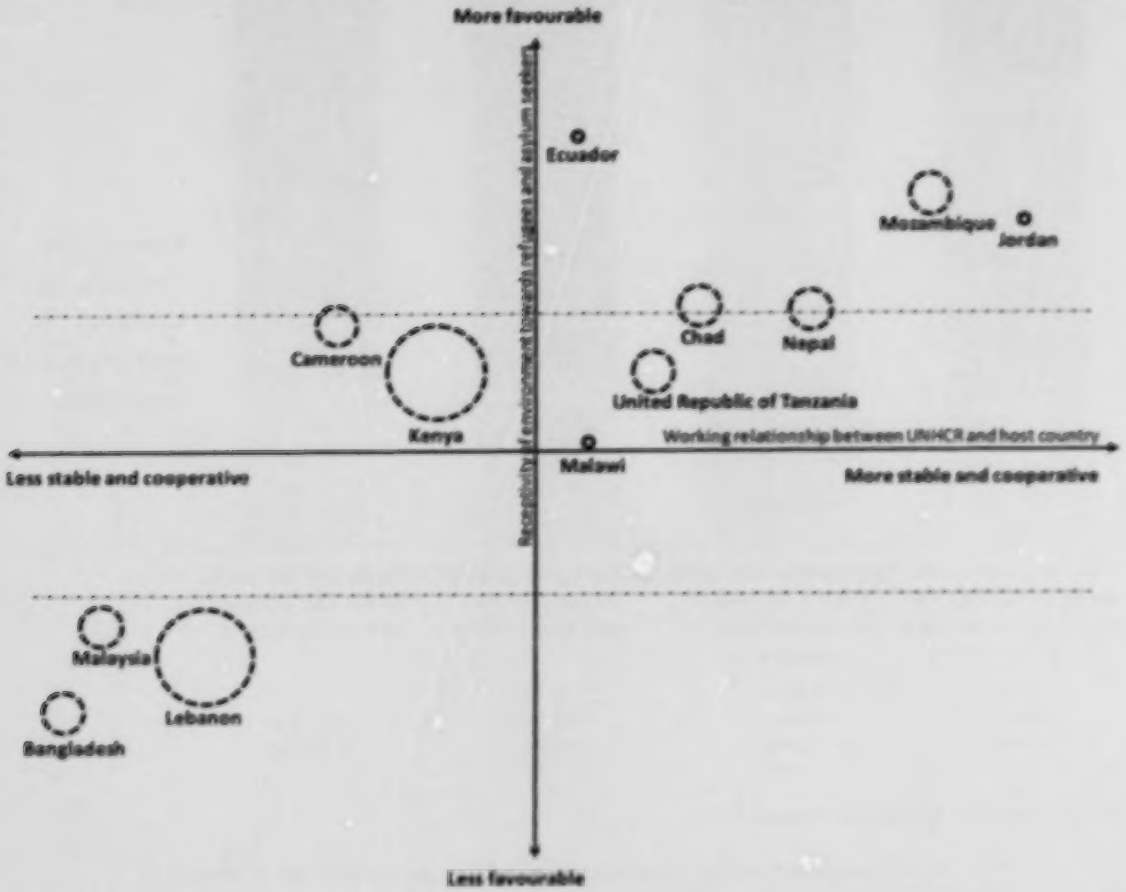
Source: OIOS analysis of evaluations and audits.

37. As indicated in result A, a range of external factors affected the relevance of UNHCR registration work. The same relevance-related factors also influenced effectiveness.

38. Two of these external contextual factors were relational in nature: one centring on the relationship between the host Government and refugees and asylum seekers (i.e., in terms of the variable degree of receptivity to these persons of concern) and the other centring on the working relationship between UNHCR and the host Government. A third contextual factor centred on the security risk in the host country. Figure VI summarizes these main constraints, whose influence has been

borne out by interviews and applied to the 12 case-study countries.[46] At same time, the precise ways in which they might have affected registration were not systematically documented. This suggests that where security risks were lower (as indicated by smaller circles), government receptivity to refugees and asylum seekers tended, as did stability and cooperation with UNHCR on registration, to be higher.

Figure VI
Key contextual factors influencing effectiveness of UNHCR registration in 12 case-study countries



Sources: Global Peace Index, Global Terrorism Index and Department of Safety and Security rating as proxies for security risk (equally weighted); Global Focus Insight narrative reports — operations plan 2017.

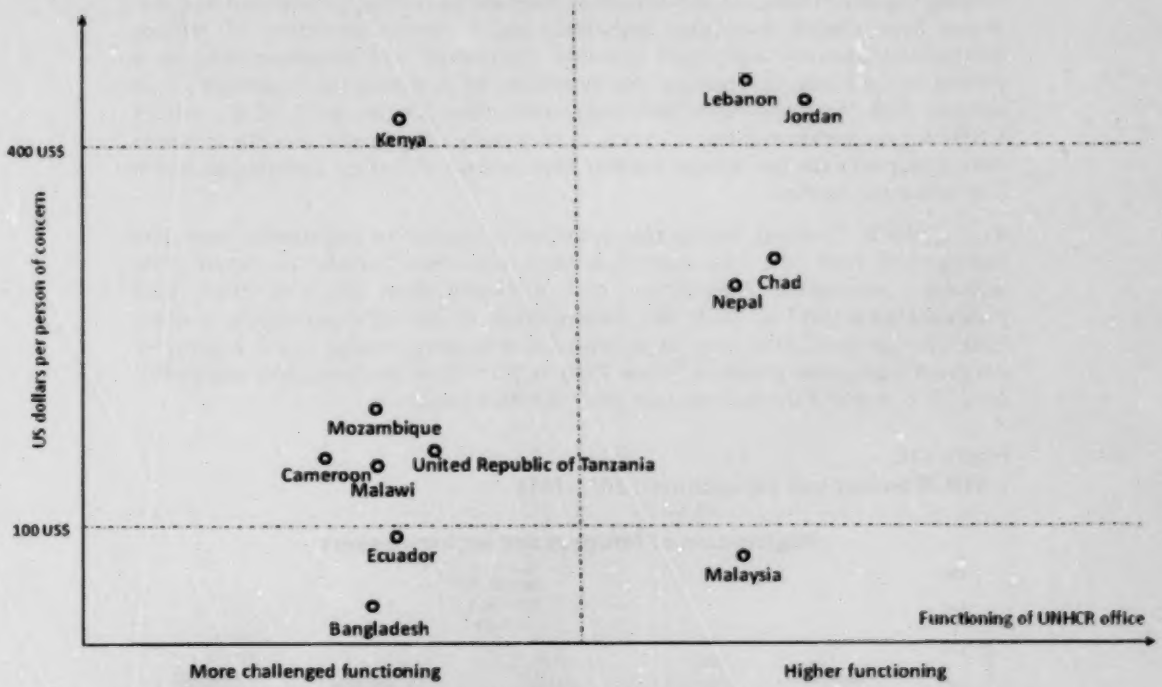
Note: Circle sizes correspond proportionally to individual countries' security risk (low/medium/high). Working relationship analysis based on issues and challenges reported by UNHCR operations, which do not always coincide with the government's viewpoint. The nature of the relationship with government is frequently correlated with receptivity to refugees and the protection environment, making it difficult to disentangle these factors.

[46] This included the feedback of host government representatives themselves, in some cases.

39. The main internal factor influencing UNHCR registration effectiveness centred on the overall functioning of the UNHCR country office.[45] Figure VII, also rooted in document review as well as stakeholder feedback, indicates a moderate positive correlation[46] between level of office functionality and office resource levels (in terms of overall budget and the staff-to-persons of concern ratio).

Figure VII

Key internal factors influencing UNHCR registration effectiveness in 12 case-study countries, in relation to overall office resourcing



Sources: UNHCR-host government memorandums of understanding; UNHCR standard operating procedures; 2017 Global Focus Insight narrative report data; OIOS case-study analyses; OIOS analysis of evaluations and audits; Global Focus Insight budget information-operations plan 2017 (all figures from 2017).

Note: Higher functioning corresponds to better-resourced staff capacity, better use of innovation/technology and clearer and more precise memorandums of understanding/standard operating procedures. More challenged functioning corresponds to the inverse characteristics.

[45] Defined using proxy variables related to staff capacity, use of technology and innovation, and the clarity and specificity of memorandums of understanding and standard operating procedures.

[46] Kendall's tau-b=0.36.

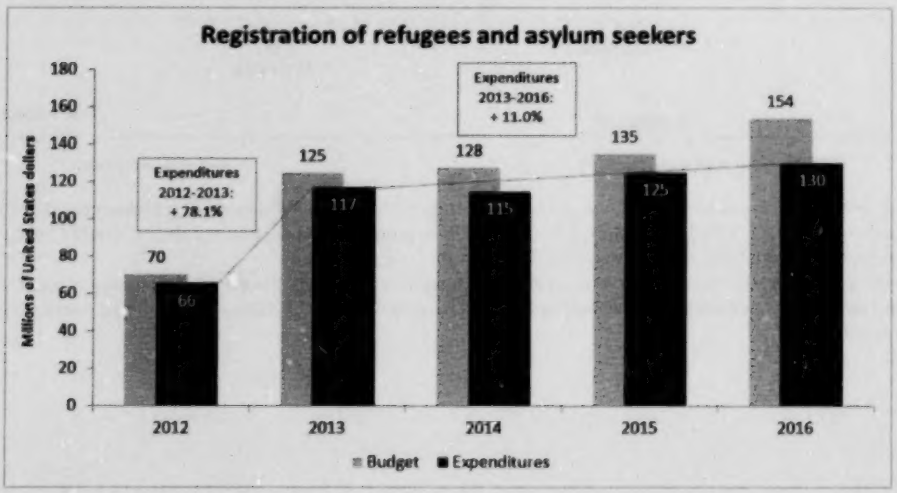
C. UNHCR has struggled to ensure that its resources keep pace with the heightened importance of, and increased demand for, registration; it has created efficiencies through strong staff contributions, policy refinement, technological advances and strengthened partnerships

UNHCR has struggled to ensure that human and financial resources meet demands

40. There has been a sharp rise in the demand for registration services, owing to a surging number of refugees and asylum seekers and expanding government demand. States have placed increasing importance on improved collection of refugee information and on "early and effective registration and documentation, as a protection tool and to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance",[47] in keeping with the foundational role registration plays for the work of the rest of UNHCR (see paras. 9 (b) and 23-35). Additionally, heightened security concerns have prompted calls for stronger identity management of foreign populations within host countries' borders.

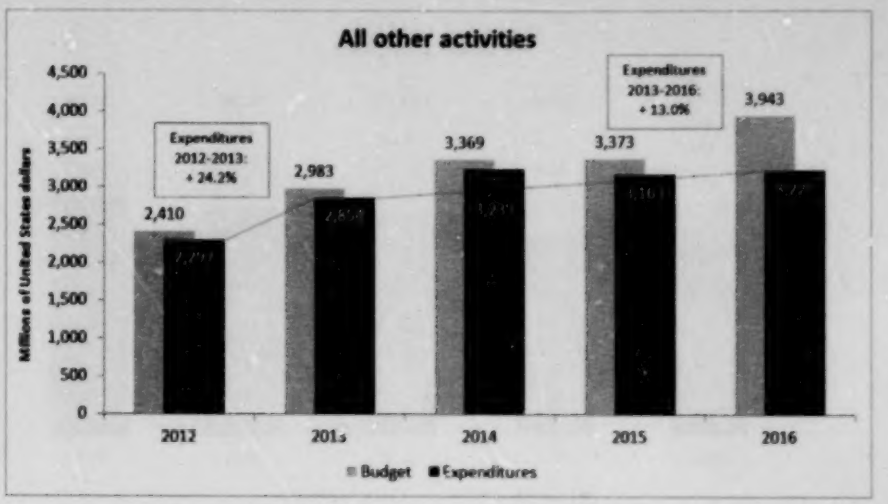
41. UNHCR financial and human resources allocated to registration and data management have not increased in tandem with these trends. As figure VIII indicates, registration expenditures rose markedly from 2012 to 2013, then plateaued from 2013 to 2016; this pattern mirrored that of expenditures in other UNHCR functions. Moreover, as figure IX shows, after a surge in the number of occupied registration positions[48] from 2012 to 2013, these increased only marginally until 2016, and at a slower pace than other UNHCR positions.

Figure VIII
UNHCR budget and expenditures, 2012-2016



[47] New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (General Assembly resolution 71/1), paras. 25, 40 and 70-71.

[48] I.e., position titles containing "registration" or "registry." Frequently, the registration function was performed by staff with other responsibilities as well. However, UNHCR does not break down the time allocated by these staff to registration.

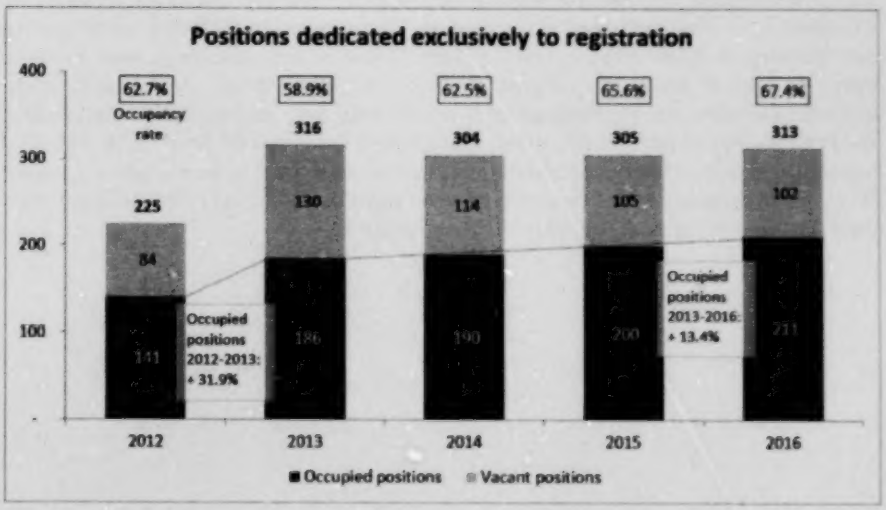


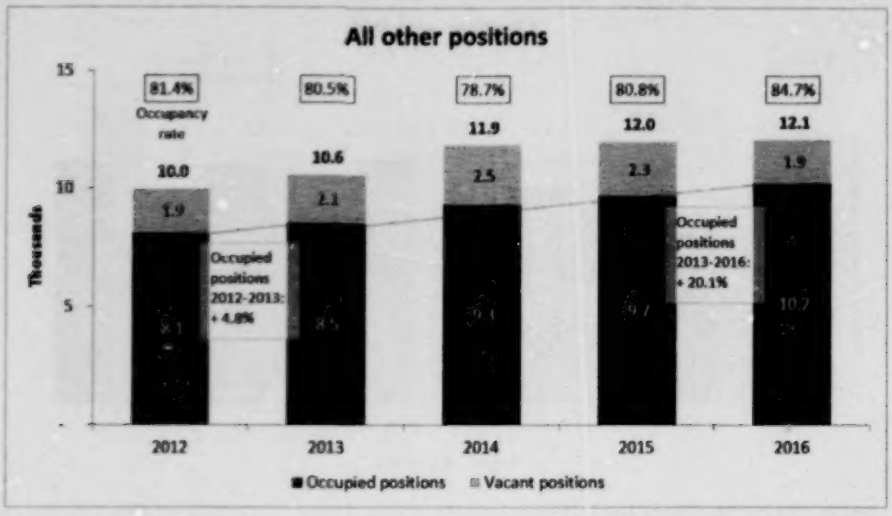
Source: OIOS-IED Global Focus Insight analysis.

Note: Budget and expenditures for registration relate, concomitantly, to one of four UNHCR planning objectives, and to population planning groups exclusively composed of refugees and asylum seekers.

Figure IX

Occupied, vacant and total positions, and occupancy rate, 2012-2016





Source: OIOS-IED Global Focus Insight analysis.

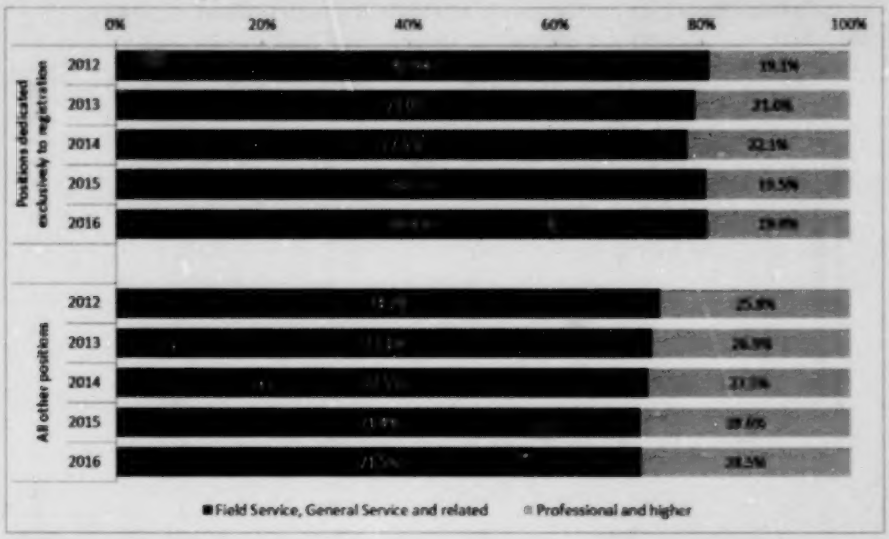
Note: UNHCR also relies, sometimes heavily, on an affiliate workforce. However, there are no centralized records on that workforce for 2012-2016. That there are lower overall occupancy rates in registration-related positions is partly due to the need for flexibility; this enables surge staffing in emergencies.

42. Furthermore, registration was conducted at a relatively low level, in terms of expected functional skills and remuneration. Registration staff[49] were more heavily concentrated in Field Service, General Service and related categories than those in other functional areas (see Figure X).[50] Direct observations during case-study missions revealed that registration staff consistently bore responsibilities exceeding the performance requirements commensurate with their official level. Although it is understandable that many operational registration staff must be at a relatively junior level, the preponderance of these junior-level positions is arguably inconsistent with the ever-more-prominent role played by registration.

[49] See footnote 48.

[50] In the United Nations Secretariat, 32 per cent of staff are in the Professional and higher categories (see A/71/360).

Figure X
Distribution of UNHCR positions among staff categories (all operations), 2012-2016



Source: OIOS-IED Global Focus Insight analysis.

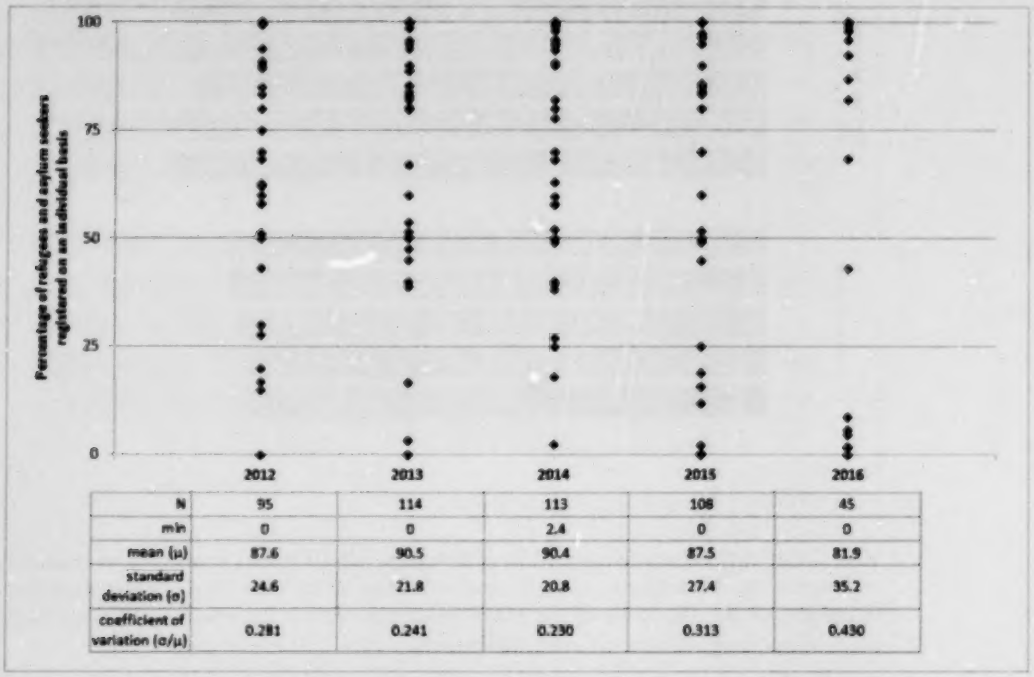
43. Despite the aforementioned resource gaps, UNHCR has continued to respond to increasing demands at a high rate of registration coverage. This increasing demand took a toll, however, as the overall registration coverage rate, while still high, slipped significantly. Figure III illustrates both of these trends.

44. UNHCR capacity to continue absorbing these increased demands is showing signs of unsustainability. Figure XI, plotting individual country operations' self-reported proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered for each year evaluated, shows proportions that vary widely, indicating widely disparate coverage levels. Figure XII reveals similarly wide variation in the average number of days that country operations reported having taken from initial approach to registration. (All country operations for which data were available were included in these analyses, not merely country case studies. The number of country operations reporting in any given year therefore varies, from 5 to 114, and individual dots in these figures might represent more than one country operation.)[51]

[51] See footnote 19.

Figure XI

Distribution of the proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis (per profile group, all UNHCR country offices reporting, 2012-2016

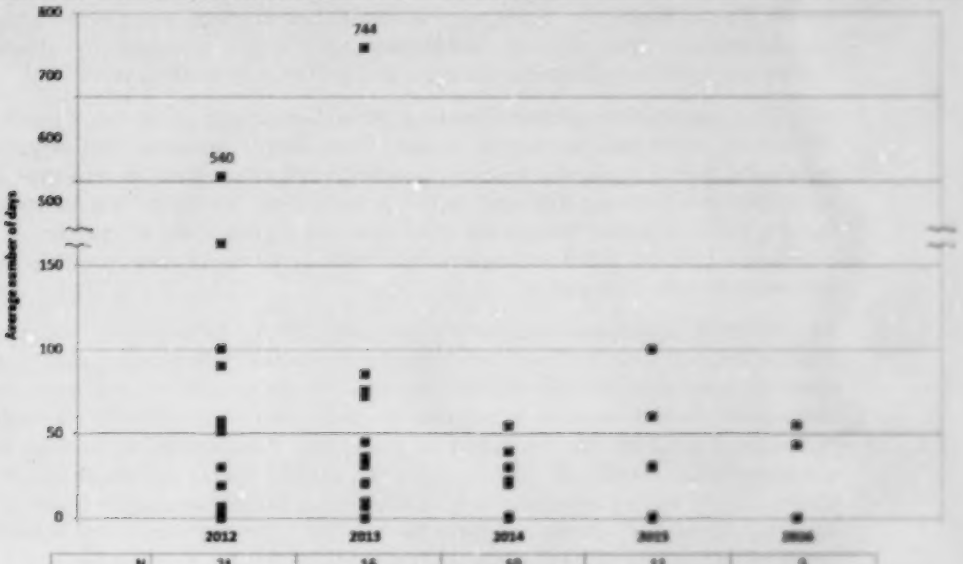


	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
N	95	114	113	108	45
min	0	0	2.4	0	0
mean (μ)	87.6	90.5	90.4	87.5	81.9
standard deviation (σ)	24.6	21.8	20.8	27.4	35.2
coefficient of variation (σ/μ)	0.281	0.241	0.230	0.313	0.430

Source: OIOS-IED Global Focus Insight analysis.

Note: Measures of central tendency and variabiiity exclude outliers. Figures for 2016 are midyear results.

Figure XII
Distribution of the average number of days from approach to individual registration of refugees and asylum seekers (per profile group), all UNHCR country offices reporting, 2012-2016



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
N	21	16	10	11	5
min	0	0	0	0	0
max	540	744	54	100	55
mean (μ)	42	34	20	29	20
median	30	31	21	1	0
standard deviation (σ)	45	29	18	31	24
coefficient of variation (σ/μ)	1.083	0.853	0.912	1.046	1.200

Source: OIOS-IED Global Focus Insight analysis.
Note: Measures of central tendency and variability exclude outliers. Figures for 2016 are midyear results.

45. Case studies confirm this picture of "unstable equilibrium", in which disruptions can have wider impacts. In Kenya, when registration had to be suspended for a month in 2016 following government administrative rearrangements, a backlog was created which, five months later, had not yet been cleared by UNHCR and the government, despite their best efforts. Similarly, the Malaysia operation reported that the size of the unregistered population, equivalent to one third of those registered, is a challenge, given the current processing capacity; hence, cases have been prioritized according to protection needs.

UNHCR sought to increase efficiency through improved policies and technology

46. Staff emphasized the importance of local-level innovation as an enabling factor, which helped them meet or exceed expectations. Headquarters- and country-level interviewees pointed out that the frequently lauded ability of offices in the Middle East to handle the recent surge in registration demands was possible only in an environment that allowed innovations to emerge, bolstered by financial resources, expedited recruitment practices and staff with innovation skills.

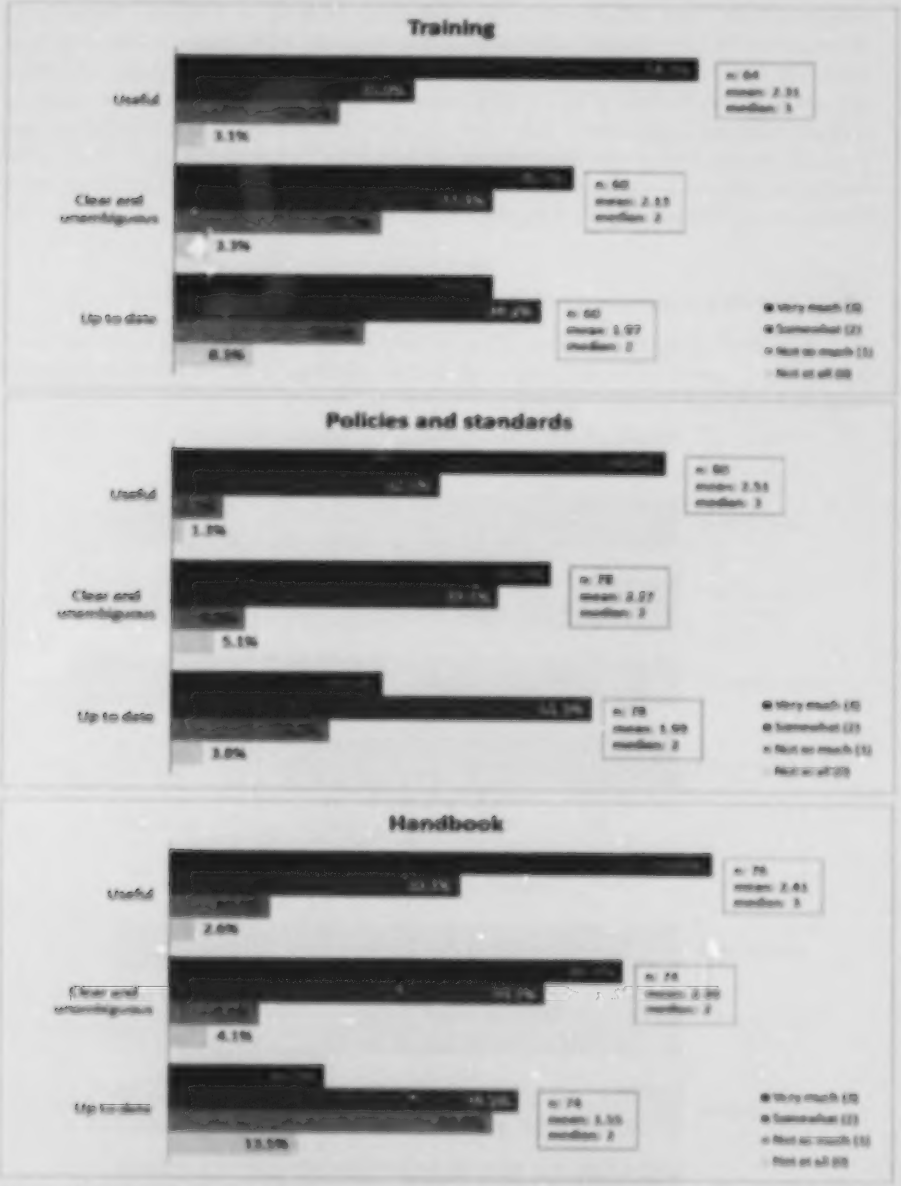
47. This potential for greater efficiency through enhanced skills was attested by registration staff's need for further capacity development. Surveyed staff repeatedly mentioned unmet needs for training, coaching and orientation on standards and guidelines and for being kept updated on policies. Staff tended to rate registration training as being useful, though not up to date (see Figure XIII). At the time of the evaluation, UNHCR had been implementing training on registration in emergencies and on continuous registration.

48. UNHCR issued new registration standards (2016), following an analysis of how the original ones had been implemented since 2003. While being concise and more generic and principle-based, the new standards are at the same time comprehensive and serve as parameters for staff, who rated UNHCR registration policies and standards for the most part favourably. Additionally, while most staff considered the Handbook for Registration useful, based on feedback from approximately half of respondents, its usefulness is limited because it is not up to date (see figure XIII). In fact, it dates back to 2003. Interviewees noted a need to fast-track the current plan to update the Handbook by 2019.

49. UNHCR also began introducing agency-wide policies and systems to facilitate more comprehensive coverage of the registration function. The expansion of the dedicated expanded Identity Management and Registration Section, beginning in January 2016, underscored the growth of the profile of registration within UNHCR. Headquarters was designing new policies for this area, most notably the Identity Management Quality Initiative, the planned purpose of which is to ensure that persons of concern are known to UNHCR and host countries and that registration capacity can be improved for better protection of and assistance to dispersed populations. However, these measures are still works in progress: global-level benefits have not yet accrued.

Figure XIII
UNHCR staff perspective on sources of registration guidance

"Overall, how would you rate [the following UNHCR sources of registration guidance] in terms of their being useful, clear and unambiguous, and up to date?"

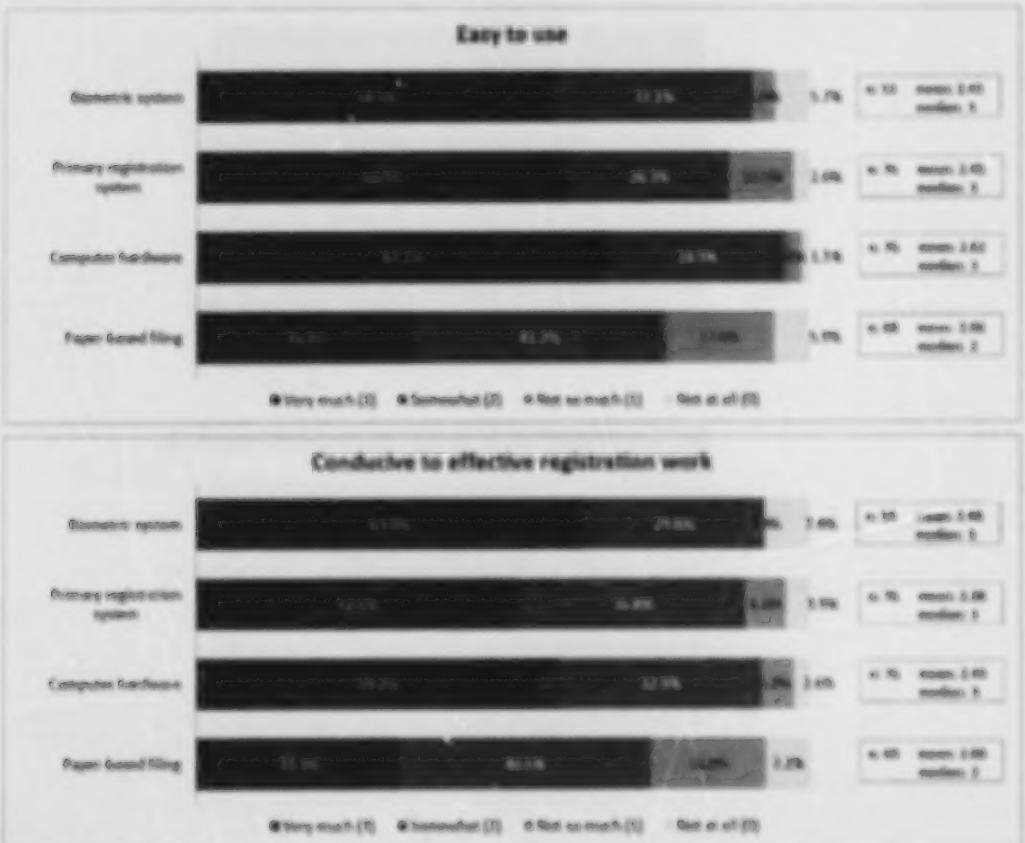


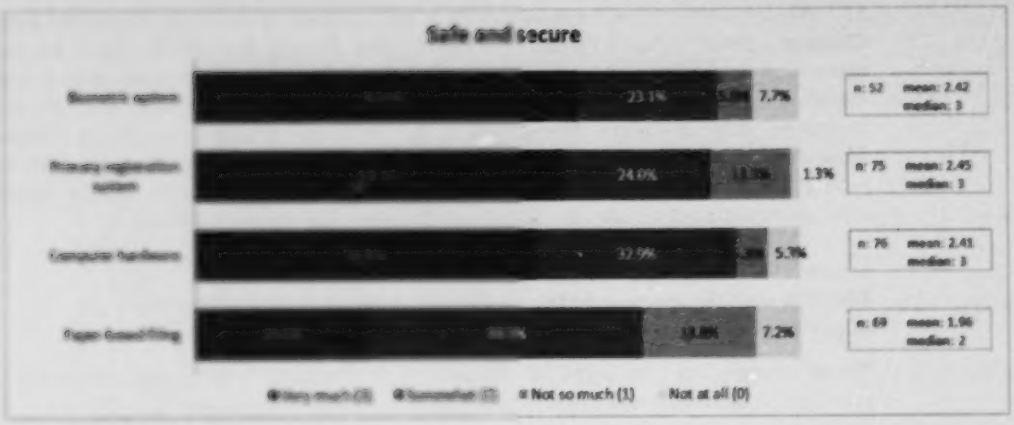
Source: Staff survey.

50. Biometric technologies generated another substantial efficiency gain, enabling UNHCR and its partners to associate unique and mostly stable physical characteristics to individuals' documented or declared information, thus anchoring individual identity over time and space. The Biometric Identity Management System), which records and stores individual fingerprints and iris patterns simultaneously, was rolled out in 24 operations starting in February 2015 (with 20 others using other biometric systems). The majority of operations continue their work without the improved effectiveness associated with this technology; and there are plans are to deploy it to 75 operations by 2020. Biometrics was intended to reduce fraud and duplication. Interviews with host government representatives and partners demonstrated that acceptance of biometrics was very high. Staff rated biometric systems to be as secure as primary registration systems, and much more conducive to effective registration work (see figure XIV).

Figure XIV
UNHCR staff perspective on technologies

"Overall, how would you rate [the following technologies available at your operation] in terms of their being easy to use, conducive to effective registration work and safe and secure?"





Source: Staff survey.

51. UNHCR also experienced challenges, such as the stalled development and deployment of the most recent version of proGres v4 (proGres in Partnership). In contrast with previous versions, proGres4 is entirely web-based and operates through a centralized database. It was designed to enhance information exchange among operations and facilitate access to case management processes managed jointly with partners. Whereas the Biometric Identity Management System already allows for the checking of identities through biometrics across operations, delays in v4 implementation have meant delays in the capitalization on its potential as a global tool for individual case management. The centralized database is expected to reduce maintenance and support costs, but it may also have the unintended consequence of stifling local innovations as sources of efficiency. In interviews, UNHCR staff indicated that the v4 delay was attributable to its manifold functionalities (which required extensive interdepartmental discussions within UNHCR) and limited funding. Once fully deployed, v4 will reportedly ensure that registration remains the foundation of all subsequent facets of case management, thus making it more systematic, and will generate more robust statistics, permitting the identification of global trends. Interviewees expressed concern that no schedule for fuller, global implementation was available.

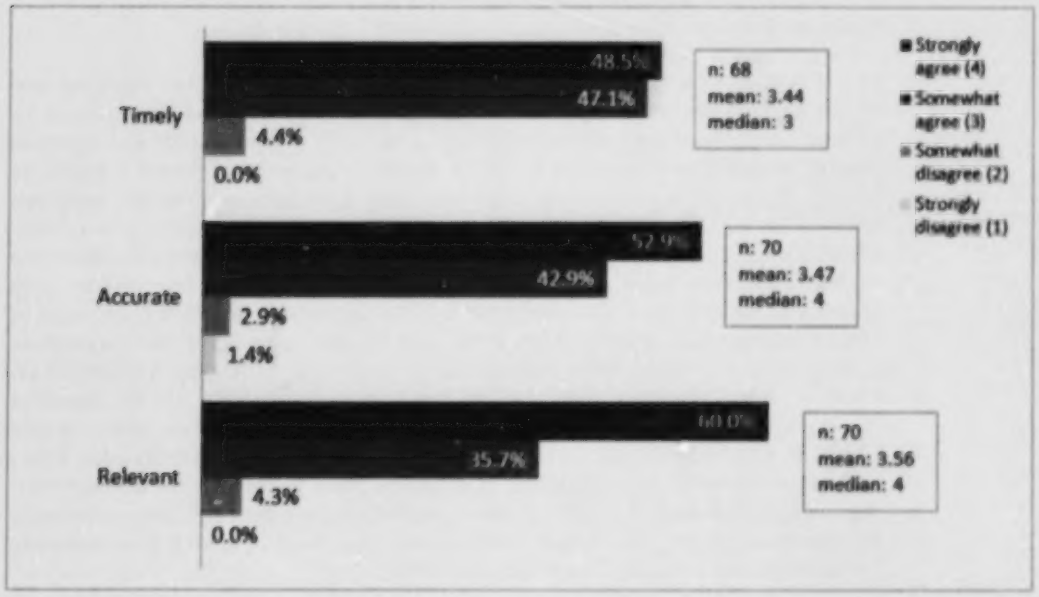
Efficiencies were recognized anecdotally, but rarely — if ever — measured

52. Anecdotal evidence from partners, resettlement country representatives and staff indicated that improvements in initial registration reduced the costs of, and expedited procedures for, verification, refugee status determination and resettlement. It also suggested that robust registration data, coupled with well-functioning partnerships, created efficiencies for assistance. Conversely, those interviewees reported that gaps in registration data negatively affected the work of UNHCR and partners, from planning to actual delivery. Staff survey respondents confirmed this picture, and strongly highlighted the importance of registration data for partners (see figure XV).

53. Systems integration between UNHCR and partners, notably the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), built on the gains that registration data can bring. Further initiatives under way, which are intended to connect registration data with assistance distribution lists, and rely on biometric data to avert duplication (e.g., multiple registrations by a single individual), need wider global implementation. In theory, this has the potential to reduce headcount and increase economy and fairness in assistance. At the same time, there are no measures for assessing efficiencies in objective terms.

Figure XV
UNHCR staff perspective on the usefulness of registration data for the work of partners

"How strongly do you agree or disagree [that, for their work,] registration data provided to operating and implementing partners [at your operation is…]"



Source: Staff survey.

D. UNHCR has confronted the inherent tension between, on the one hand, potential benefits that accrue from widespread data sharing and a greater registration role of Governments and, on the other, potential protection-related risks

54. Registration is pivotal both to the successful fulfilment by UNHCR of its broader mandate, and to the work of its partners. Pursuant to the exercise of its registration role, UNHCR needs to ensure that all of its work is undertaken in alignment with international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law; registration must be conducted with a view to protecting the privacy of refugees and asylum seekers, including personal data.

55. Essential to this process is the assignment of clear-cut roles and responsibilities to UNHCR, host Governments and other partners; well-defined standard operating procedures; appropriate training, verification and quality-control measures; and data sharing with host Governments and other partners so as to maximize coordination. Host governments often serve as assistance providers. They are also sovereign States with legitimate security concerns.

56. UNHCR is confronted with the fundamental tension between the need to protect refugees and asylum seekers while simultaneously serving the data needs of host Governments and partners, in two main areas of registration, namely, data sharing and the increased operational role of host Governments in registration. Data sharing can help facilitate a timelier, better-targeted, better-coordinated and more effective response. At the same time, it can pose a risk of data breaches, thereby compromising the protection of already vulnerable individuals, especially in countries where data firewalls for the protection of individuals' privacy are weak. Along the same lines, while a unilateral host government role in day-to-day registration management is in accordance with its obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and has the potential to significantly streamline registration processes with other governmental services and administrative functions, it can also raise protection concerns.

57. The tension between data sharing and protection is not a hypothetical prospect, since it is observed directly in case-study missions. In one case, members of specific religious groups voiced a strong reluctance to register, as they did not trust UNHCR partners' use of data and were afraid that their data might be shared with authorities in the country where they had been persecuted. This reluctance led to "exclusion error" and prevented access to assistance and protection. In another case, the host Government's shutdown of the entity responsible for refugees resulted in widespread disruption in registration processes. Subsequently, the entity was re-established. At the time of the evaluation, UNHCR was in the process of ceding leadership of registration processes to this very entity; if a future shutdown were to recur after data, and data management, were handed over to this entity, hundreds of thousands of persons of concern would be in jeopardy.

58. The Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has acknowledged this tension,[52] a concern reiterated by UNHCR staff at Headquarters and at field level, as well as partners (including select host government representatives). UNHCR has therefore taken steps to address these concerns. In some countries, it developed specific memorandums of understanding and data-sharing agreements with partners and host Governments. (There were nine such arrangements across the 12 countries included in its analysis.) However, they were of varying specificity and clarity and some were unsigned. Further, they do not have meaning unless enforced. In May 2015, UNHCR issued a Policy on the Protection of Personal Data of Persons of Concern to UNHCR, which provides guidance on confidentiality and data-sharing standards and articulates clear criteria for verifying partners' data capacity. Additionally, proGres v4 contains a specific consent form which persons of concern could use to

[52] Executive Committee conclusion No. 91 (LII) on registration of refugees and asylum seekers (2001).

specify which information can be shared with whom. The effects of these efforts have yet to be seen, however.

V. Conclusion

59. Registration serves as a foundational element for achievement of the UNHCR mandate. Towards this end, UNHCR has navigated complex and shifting social and political environments to shape its role in relation to host Governments, which bear the ultimate responsibility for registration. It has also sought to be maximally relevant in the provision of its specific registration support, and in its attempts to "leave no one behind". Numerous examples evidence the ways in which its registration work has contributed to successful assistance, protection and durable solutions.

60. Looking to the future, UNHCR, host Governments and other partners will face renewed and novel challenges, many of which are articulated in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (General Assembly resolution 71/1) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Assembly resolution 70/1). Not least of these is the need to ensure measures through which States address their legitimate security concerns in a manner that is consistent with their obligations under international refugee law. In this regard, continued technical expertise, coupled with redoubled advocacy work, will prove pivotal. Future success in registration will also depend on multilateral support so as to ensure adequate resourcing of all country operations; strong and stable working relationships with host Governments and partners; ongoing staff capacity-building; and widespread recognition that the initial costs of better registration can generate value, credibility, savings and security, without sacrificing the protection of refugees and asylum seekers.

VI. Recommendations

61. OIOS makes five recommendations, which it deems important according to its criticality rating system.

Recommendation 1 (paras. 17-19, 29, 36, 40, 41, 48-50 and 56-61)

In order to sustain momentum on recent relevance-, effectiveness- and efficiency-enhancing initiatives, UNHCR should:

1. Update the 2003 Handbook for Registration and related policies/guidelines, with a view to ensuring consistency across operations to the maximum degree feasible;

2. Complete the specifications of the Identity Management Quality Initiative;

3. Strengthen the progressive implementation of its Policy on the Protection of Personal Data of Persons of Concern to UNHCR, including the development of associated guidance and training to address data

protection and refugee consent issues, both with UNHCR operations and among host Governments and other partners.

Indicators: (a) Handbook updated; (b) Identity Management Quality Initiative specifications completed; (c) data protection operational guidance developed; (d) Evidence of promotion, implementation, coverage and use of (a)-(c)

Recommendation 2 (paras. 22-24, 27-29, 30-32, 39-42 and 60)

In line with its mandate, and with the call of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind, UNHCR should:

1. In an evidence-based manner, identify country operations known to have low registration coverage, and also identify, within these operations, the underlying reasons for access barriers, and their implications for other aspects of the UNHCR mandate (assistance, protection and durable solutions);

2. Articulate, where low registration coverage has had negative impacts, plans for addressing challenges in a timely manner within each of these operations;

3. Building on data in this report, identify country operations where enhanced advocacy efforts are needed to ensure that the human rights of all persons of concern are protected in government-led registration processes, and undertake these efforts, as feasible.

Indicators: (a) underlying reasons for and implications of access barriers identified in low-coverage countries in an evidence-based manner; (b) plans for addressing country-specific challenges identified; (c) high-priority country operations identified and advocacy undertaken, wherever feasible; (d) evidence of promotion, implementation, coverage and use of (a)-(c)

Recommendation 3 (paras. 27, 28, 31, 32, 35, 36, 40, 47, 51 and 52)

In order to increase the accuracy, quality and robustness of registration data used in downstream processes, UNHCR should finalize the development and accelerate the roll-out of proGres v4 (proGres in Partnership).

Indicators: roll-out of proGres v4 accelerated, leading to evidence of higher accuracy and quality of registration data and more effective case management

Recommendation 4 (paras. 53-55)

UNHCR should identify, with partners, which registration data elements most enhance their shared work on meeting the needs of refugees and asylum seekers. Pertinent indicators for these and any other data elements that are key to measuring the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of inter-agency humanitarian action should then be developed and utilized to measure effectiveness, in close collaboration with key partners.

Indicator: registration data elements most valuable for key partners identified, indicators developed and monitored

Recommendation 5 (See figures based on Global Focus Insight data (paras. 15, 45 and 53-55)

In order to strengthen registration-related monitoring data so that they can be utilized more fully as a foundation for evidence-based planning and decision-making, UNHCR should increase the number of operations reporting under registration-related objectives on Global Focus Insight (or other appropriate outlets emanating from the results-based management revision project).

Indicator: number of operations reporting increased

Annex I

Formal comments provided by UNHCR

In the present annex, OIOS presents the full text of comments received from UNHCR on the evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. This practice has been instituted in line with General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

UNHCR response to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) programme evaluation of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

1. In response to your memorandum of 6 March 2017 addressed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, on the programme evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), please find below the main observations of UNHCR on the formal draft report. In a separate document, annexed to this memorandum, we provide further details on the planned actions to implement the recommendations.

2. The evaluation assesses the role of UNHCR in the registration of refugees and asylum seekers from 2012 to 2016. Registration (or identity management) is a highly complex topic. It is impacted by the different operational contexts across the world, thus the level of involvement of UNHCR varies greatly. Registration is a continuous activity, requiring regular updating and verification, and has numerous protection aspects. Protection encompasses all actions aimed at ensuring the equal access to and enjoyment of rights of women, men, girls and boys of concern to UNHCR, in accordance with the relevant bodies of law, including international refugee law, human rights law and humanitarian law. There is a broad span of protection activities that are serviced and informed by quality registration. There may also be some operational contexts where registration may not per se have a positive protection impact or protection dividends for persons of concern and that can be achieved without individual registration.

3. Undertaking an evaluation of this subject at global level is necessarily a challenge. We appreciate that the limitations in time and resources as well as the maximum length of the report did not allow for a more in-depth and broad review of the various aspects of registration, including the different protection angles and nuances, in different operational contexts and settings. Nevertheless, the report does capture various important elements related to registration, so we would like to commend OIOS for having undertaken this challenging evaluation.

4. OIOS mainly drew data from Global Focus Insight, the UNHCR internal business intelligence tool. While this may provide relevant management information, it should be kept in mind that the UNHCR current Results Framework has some 185 impact indicators and over 700 performance indicators. Out of the entire Results Framework, operations select those objectives and corresponding indicators that are most important or that best capture their priorities. Due to the wide variety of operations and their specific contexts, these can change over time

and differ from operation to operation. This would need to be taken into consideration when analysing and drawing high-level findings based on indicator data in Global Focus Insight.

5. In addition, UNHCR is capturing and maintaining various data sets in different systems such as Managing Systems, Resources and People, the UNHCR resource management system covering finance, supply chain, human resources and payroll, as well as a specific database for population statistics, which is in the public domain (http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/). While the latter records information from various sources, it does allow for tracking the number of UNHCR registered individual refugees and asylum seekers per annum. These systems are the authoritative source for related data. Due to an apparent miscommunication, the over-reliance on Global Focus Insight data came to the fore at a late stage in the process. The strict deadline for completion of the report did not allow these limitations to be addressed.

6. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the evaluation, by and large, captures interesting findings and draws attention to some key related issues. Overall, UNHCR agrees with the high-level recommendations. Various actions to implement them are already ongoing and will be continued as required. UNHCR acknowledges the need to take further steps to strengthen its registration data analysis, and to share this with key partners. Finalization of all remaining functionalities of proGres v4 (proGres in Partnership) and the planned accelerated roll-out will facilitate this further. Moreover, UNHCR has also recently embarked on a review of its Results-Based Management Framework. Within this context, it will also review indicators, including those related to registration.

7. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your colleagues for their cooperation throughout the conduct of this evaluation.

Annex II

Response of OIOS to comments of UNHCR

1. OIOS thanks UNHCR for its comments, and for the general appreciation expressed to OIOS for its work in addressing this highly complex evaluation topic.

2. With regard to the data sources used in the analysis, as raised in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the UNHCR memorandum included in annex I, it should be noted that the evaluation inception paper, developed in consultation with UNHCR at the outset of the evaluation, clearly stated the intention to use UNHCR Global Focus Insight and Managing Systems, Resources and People (MSRP) data as part of the evaluation methodology. Contrary to the claim of UNHCR in paragraph 5, MSRP data was in fact used for analysis of budgets, expenditures and positions (figures VIII, IX and X); data were merely extracted using Global Focus Insight, hence Global Focus Insight was cited as the source. The OIOS evaluation team worked closely with UNHCR throughout the evaluation (with excellent inputs from UNHCR colleagues) in order to make use of these data in a credible manner, and during the report finalization process, still other UNHCR colleagues who were most closely involved in monitoring data systems confirmed that the OIOS analyses were indeed as robust as possible, in light of UNHCR data limitations.

3. From past and current OIOS inspections and evaluations of UNHCR, the limitations and shortcomings of the Global Focus Insight data are well known to be less than fit for purpose for a large and complex organization like UNHCR; but these are nevertheless the only official sources of UNHCR monitoring data. OIOS has noted the attendant data limitations in paragraph 14 and footnote 19 of the present report. OIOS based its conclusions on a mixed-method approach through which, it triangulated all available data from the sources enumerated in paragraph 14. The conclusions in this report follow this principle; accordingly, no conclusions were based solely on any single data source — on Global Focus Insight, the Managing Systems, Resources and People system, or others. In implementing recommendation 5, UNHCR will have the opportunity to reinforce the data it has available for evidence-based planning and decision-making.

4. These comments notwithstanding, OIOS is encouraged by the fact that, in its management response, UNHCR has broadly accepted the evaluation's analysis, results statements and recommendations.

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Evaluation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The mandate of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to ensure the timely, coherent, coordinated and principled response of the international community to disasters and emergencies and to facilitate the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and sustainable development. OCHA has five core mandated functions, namely, coordination, policy, humanitarian financing, information management and advocacy.

The present evaluation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) of the advocacy role of OCHA from 2013-2016 was guided by evaluation questions in the following areas:

(a) **Relevance.** Extent to which advocacy work was aligned with the mandate and specific advocacy needs;

(b) **Effectiveness.** Extent of the effects of advocacy efforts on knowledge and attitudes conducive to humanitarian goals and action;

(c) **Efficiency.** Extent to which human and financial resources and other inputs were managed to maximize the benefits of advocacy efforts;

(d) **Cross-cutting issues.** Extent to which OCHA advocacy incorporated humanitarian principles and cross-cutting issues relating to gender and human rights.

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During the evaluation period, OCHA undertook a wide range of public and private advocacy at all levels of the Office, both to advance its own mandate and on behalf of the humanitarian system. Through those efforts, it sought to influence awareness, attitudes, decisions and other actions among various stakeholder groups in order to assist and protect those affected by humanitarian crises. The wide range of humanitarian issues and specific humanitarian crises covered, the allocation of resources dedicated to advocacy and the establishment of tools to help OCHA to manage the advocacy function underscore the relevance of those efforts. Moreover, external and internal stakeholders indicated that specific OCHA advocacy activities addressed the most critical areas requiring advocacy, with no major coverage gaps — save, perhaps, a disproportionate focus on high-profile crises and less attention to "forgotten" crises. External stakeholders further acknowledged the unique value-add that OCHA brings to advocacy compared with other humanitarian actors.

There is evidence that specific advocacy efforts have positively influenced knowledge, awareness and decision-making. The Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS uncovered robust evidence of positive effects in two areas in particular: (a) influencing normative discussion and debate by intergovernmental bodies; and (b) negotiating humanitarian access. Other results, although more mixed, were also highlighted: the role of the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator as chief advocate in speaking out on specific crises; influencing Security Council deliberations on crises and cross-cutting issues; obtaining financing to meet the full scope of humanitarian needs; and the World Humanitarian Summit. In those cases, external as well as internal factors hampered the full attainment of targeted results. All told, however, the aggregate effects of the overall OCHA advocacy efforts are unknown.

A series of structural and managerial challenges, meanwhile, have hampered OCHA in achieving maximum results for its advocacy investment. At Headquarters, a key senior-level post, Chief of the Strategic Communications Branch, has been occupied by four temporary replacements since the post was vacated in 2012; the recruitment process to fill the post has not yet been completed. More fundamentally, advocacy is the only one of the five mandated functions of OCHA that lacks a coherent, cohesive framework around which to convene the Office in the pursuit of shared corporate advocacy objectives. Although it invested in the development of a suite of tools to help it to manage the advocacy function, OCHA did not sufficiently roll them out. It has no internal coordination mechanism in place through which to set advocacy priorities, jointly plan and connect complementary advocacy efforts across the entirety of its operations, manage internal and external challenges and risks and monitor and report on those efforts, under the leadership of its chief advocate, the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator.

OIOS makes three important recommendations, namely, that OCHA:

- Complete the recruitment of the Chief of the Strategic Communications Branch
- Consolidate its core Headquarters-based advocacy functions under the leadership of the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator, whose office should further establish and manage an advocacy coordination mechanism;

- Revisit and update as necessary its 2006 Policy Instruction on OCHA Advocacy, 2006 Guidelines on OCHA Advocacy and 2013-2017 Advocacy Strategy, and roll them out, also under the leadership of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator.

This analysis aligns with the conclusions of the OCHA-commissioned Functional Review (2016), which recommended that OCHA should become more efficient and streamlined at a broad organizational level.

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I. Introduction

1. The Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) identified the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for evaluation on the basis of a risk assessment undertaken to identify Secretariat programme evaluation priorities. The Committee for Programme and Coordination selected the programme evaluation of OCHA for consideration at its fifty-seventh session, to be held in June 2017.[1] The General Assembly endorsed the selection in its resolution 70/8.

2. The general frame of reference for OIOS is set out in General Assembly resolutions 48/218B, 54/244, and 59/272, as well as ST/SGB/273, which authorizes OIOS to initiate, carry out and report on any action that it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities. OIOS evaluation is provided for in the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (see ST/SGB/2016/6, regulation 7.1).

3. The overall evaluation objective was to determine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the advocacy role of OCHA for the coordination of humanitarian affairs from 2013 to 2016. The evaluation topic emerged from a programme-level risk assessment described in the evaluation inception paper.[2] The evaluation was conducted in conformity with the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system.[3]

4. Comments by OCHA management were sought on the present report and taken into account. The formal response by OCHA is set out in annex I.

II. Background

History and mandate

5. The mandate of OCHA is to ensure the timely, coherent, coordinated and principled response of the international community to disasters and emergencies and to facilitate the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and development.

6. This mandate derives from General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 1991, in which the Assembly created the position of the Emergency Relief Coordinator in the person of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. The Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator serves as the United Nations focal point responsible for all emergencies requiring United Nations humanitarian assistance (see ST/SGB/1999/8, sect. 3). To assist with this coordination, the Assembly established, in the same resolution, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator. The Committee is the primary inter-agency humanitarian coordination mechanism.

[1] See the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its fifty-fifth session (A/70/16), June 2015.

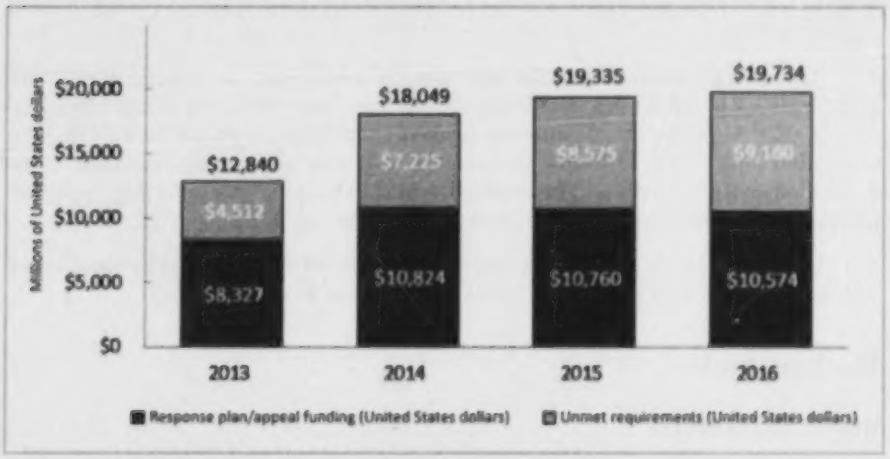
[2] IED-16-011, OIOS-IED Inception Paper: Evaluation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

[3] These norms and standards are set by the United Nations Evaluation Group.

7. OCHA has five mandated functions, namely, coordination, policy, humanitarian financing, information management and advocacy. Its broad programmatic objectives and strategies are articulated in the proposed strategic framework for the period 2016-2017 (see A/69/6 (Prog. 23)) and the OCHA Strategic Framework for the period 2014-2017.[4]

8. Since the OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division last evaluated OCHA, in the period 2012-2013 (E/AC.51/2013/3), there have been six Inter-agency Standing Committee-designated level 3 emergencies,[5] three of which occurred concurrently. As indicated in figure I, along with that growth, humanitarian funding requirements increased significantly.[6] However, despite record donations from Member States, the scale of unmet needs (i.e., funding shortfalls) continued to grow.

Figure I
Humanitarian funding requirements and unmet needs, 2013-2016



Source: OIOS compilation of OCHA Financial Tracking Service data.

Advocacy role

9. OCHA has integrated its advocacy mandate into all aspects of its programme of work. Advocacy appears in its strategic framework, the subprogramme structure, the Policy Instruction on OCHA Advocacy and Guidelines on OCHA Advocacy of 27 December 2006, a 2015 corporate advocacy action plan and the 2013-2017 Advocacy Strategy. In the policy instruction, it is noted that advocacy means using information strategically to influence the policies or practices of key actors with the

[4] See the OCHA Strategic Plan 2014-2017, available from https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OCHA%20SF%202014-2017%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf.

[5] Namely, the Philippines, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Iraq and Yemen. Declaration of an Inter-Agency Standing Committee level 3 response activates a system-wide mobilization of capacity (leadership, staffing and funding) to enable accelerated and scaled-up delivery of assistance and protection.

[6] See https://ftsbeta.unocha.org/appeals/overview/ for 2013-2016.

aim of assisting and protecting those in need (see para. 8.2 of the instruction). OCHA expounds on this role as follows:

> To OCHA, advocacy means communicating the right messages to the right people at the right time. These people include humanitarian agencies, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, national Governments, local and international media, parties to conflict, companies, donors, regional bodies, communities affected by emergencies and the general public. The aim is that they increase urgent funding or support, change their policies or keep to their commitments.[9]

10. OCHA distinguishes between its public advocacy (for example, press conferences, media interviews, editorials, awareness-raising campaigns, remarks before open sessions of intergovernmental bodies and speeches) and its private advocacy (for example, private conversations, meetings, briefings, consultations and e-mails).

11. While advocacy was nominally located in subprogramme 5 (humanitarian emergency information and advocacy), with substantive responsibility for public advocacy falling under the Strategic Communications Branch, it is also included in all other subprogrammes as a transversal theme. Many staff in the other subprogrammes and at all levels of OCHA reported either directly engaging in public and/or private advocacy or significantly supporting such efforts (see paras. 21-23 below). At the global level, the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator served as chief advocate on behalf of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee membership as well as for OCHA and was supported by all OCHA divisions in that capacity (see ST/SGB/1999/8, sect. 3). OCHA undertook advocacy on specific humanitarian crises and on thematic humanitarian issues. It also supported advocacy by humanitarian coordinators and humanitarian country teams and at high-level events and donor conferences. Advocacy at all levels was shaped by country-level information gathered by OCHA and partners.

12. Within that context, and using that definition, the evaluation was aimed at answering the following main questions:

(a) **Relevance.** How closely aligned have OCHA advocacy efforts and specific messages been with its mandate and with specific advocacy needs at the global, regional and country levels?

(b) **Effectiveness.** To what extent has OCHA advocacy had its overall intended effect of developing knowledge and attitudes conducive to the goals of the Office and the goals of the wider humanitarian system, ultimately enhancing humanitarian action?

(c) **Efficiency.** How efficiently has OCHA managed its human and financial resources and other internal and external inputs into its advocacy work, to maximize the benefits of that work?

(d) **Cross-cutting issues.** To what extent has OCHA advocacy incorporated humanitarian principles and cross-cutting issues relating to gender and human rights?

Result A below covers relevance issues, results B and D cover efficiency issues and result C covers effectiveness and cross-cutting issues.

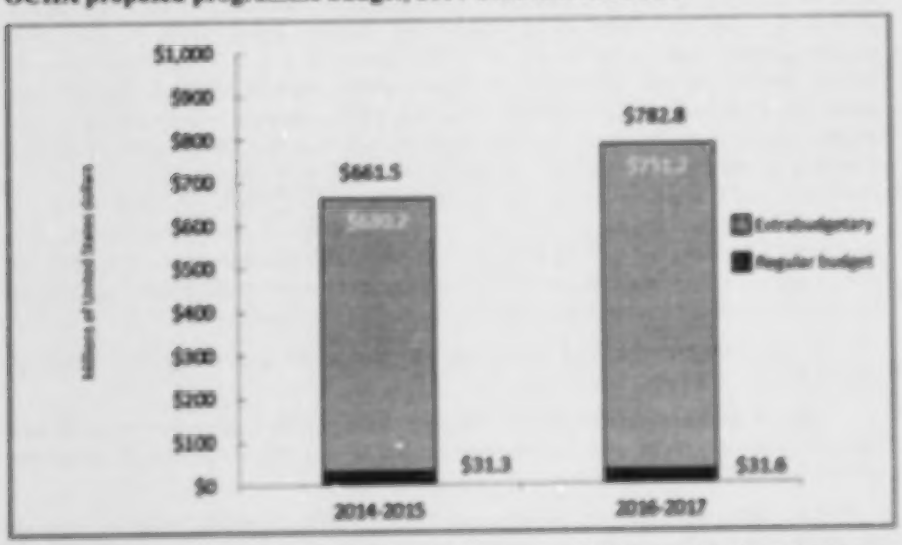
[9] See http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/advocacy/overview.

13. The evaluation was also aimed at identifying the key internal and external factors that have influenced the performance of OCHA in the area of advocacy and how effectively it has managed those factors.

Budget, offices and human resources

14. The OCHA budget is subsumed under part VI (human rights and humanitarian affairs) of the United Nations Secretariat programme budget. In 2016-2017, OCHA received 0.56 per cent of the total regular budget of the United Nations Secretariat (see A/70/6 (Introduction), table 2). As indicated in figure II, the overall OCHA budget has grown, primarily through increased extrabudgetary resources, which account for approximately 95 to 96 per cent of its funding. While it was not possible to calculate the precise resources allocated by OCHA to advocacy, staff reported, in interviews and surveys, that advocacy-related activities occupy a sizeable proportion of their time, from 25 to 100 per cent.

Figure II
OCHA proposed programme budget, 2014-2015 and 2016-2017



Source: OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division compilation of budgetary data from A/70/6 (Sect. 27) and A/68/6 (Sect. 27).

15. OCHA maintains headquarters in New York and Geneva. It also comprises 6 regional offices, 29 country offices, 3 liaison offices and 20 humanitarian adviser teams.[8] As noted in para. 11, staff at all of those levels, and in most of the offices reviewed, undertake various forms of advocacy.

16. Table 1 shows that in 2016, OCHA had 2,271 staff. In 2017, budget cuts led to the elimination of 218 posts.

[8] OCHA presence map, October 2016. Humanitarian adviser teams comprise one or more advisers, who support countries that have no OCHA country office but are deemed to be at risk and therefore need a humanitarian presence.

Table 1
Distribution of OCHA staff, 2016

Office location	*Number of staff*	*Percentage of total*
Headquarters	528	23.2
Regional offices	191	8.4
Liaison offices	24	1.1
Field offices	1 528	67.3
Total	**2 271**	**100.0**

Source: OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division compilation of data from the OCHA Plan and Budget (2016), available from http://www.unocha.org/node/212326.

III. Methodology

17. The evaluation employed a mixed-method approach featuring the following data sources:

(a) **Interviews and focus group discussions at OCHA headquarters in New York and in Geneva:** 41 OCHA staff;

(b) **Desk-based interviews:** 12 humanitarian coordinators, 31 heads, deputy heads and key staff of regional and country offices and 17 humanitarian adviser teams;[9]

(c) **Case studies of field offices:** Interviews and focus groups of 123 OCHA staff, partners and stakeholders in seven offices;[10]

(d) **Bellwether (i.e., external thought leader) analysis:** Interviews with 18 reputable external (i.e., non-United Nations) humanitarian thought leaders;[11]

(e) **Structured document reviews:** Creation of a database of all 1,002 public advocacy outputs (for example, statements, speeches and remarks, and press releases) known to have been published from April 2013 to October 2016 and media analytics of press coverage of OCHA from 2013 to 2016;

(f) **Surveys:** Web-based surveys of OCHA field staff;[12] a random sample of OCHA partners;[13] and all representatives of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Emergency Directors Group.[14]

[9] Of the 19 established at the time of the evaluation. In 2017, the number increased to 20.

[10] African Union and Brussels liaison offices; regional offices for Southern and Eastern Africa and for West and Central Africa; Ethiopia, Mali and Somalia country offices. The OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division selected case studies, with inputs from OCHA, based on size, duration, budget, substantive focus and number of United Nations entities in the country.

[11] Bellwether interviewees were selected independently by the OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division and a humanitarian evaluation consultant, based on desk reviews and snowball sampling.

[12] 25.0 per cent response rate.

[13] 17.3 per cent response rate.

[14] 87.0 per cent response rate.

18. In 2015, OCHA commissioned a functional review to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of OCHA by ensuring that it had the optimal structure, resources and capacities to deliver on its mandate and commitments. [15] The Functional Review did not aspire to evaluate OCHA performance, nor did it cover advocacy in depth. [16] The OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division maintained liaison with the Functional Review team during the evaluation and thoroughly reviewed its report. Wherever appropriate, relevant conclusions are cited from the Functional Review which, although aimed at broader organizational issues, corroborate the Division's conclusions surrounding advocacy specifically.

19. The evaluation encountered four limitations: the inherent difficulty of measuring the effects of advocacy, particularly private advocacy; the lack of a comprehensive staff list; the limitation of the staff survey to field staff; and the low response rates for the partner and staff surveys. The Inspection and Evaluation Division addressed the first limitation by obtaining examples of key private advocacy efforts during interviews and focus groups and substantiating claims of the effects or non-effects of those efforts through documentary as well as perceptual evidence wherever possible, taking into account external constraints. It addressed the third limitation by triangulating field-level feedback with non-field staff interview data, and the final limitation by undertaking non-respondent bias analysis to ensure a sufficient level of representativeness of the population to allow the inclusion of the survey data in the present analysis. It was impossible to address the second limitation given that, by definition, it was unknown which staff and partner information was missing.

IV. Evaluation results

A. OCHA advocacy efforts were recognized as being aligned to the OCHA mandate and as adding value to humanitarian action while addressing a wide range of humanitarian crises and issues, although sustaining attention to lower-profile crises proved challenging

OCHA undertook a wide range of advocacy activities at all levels

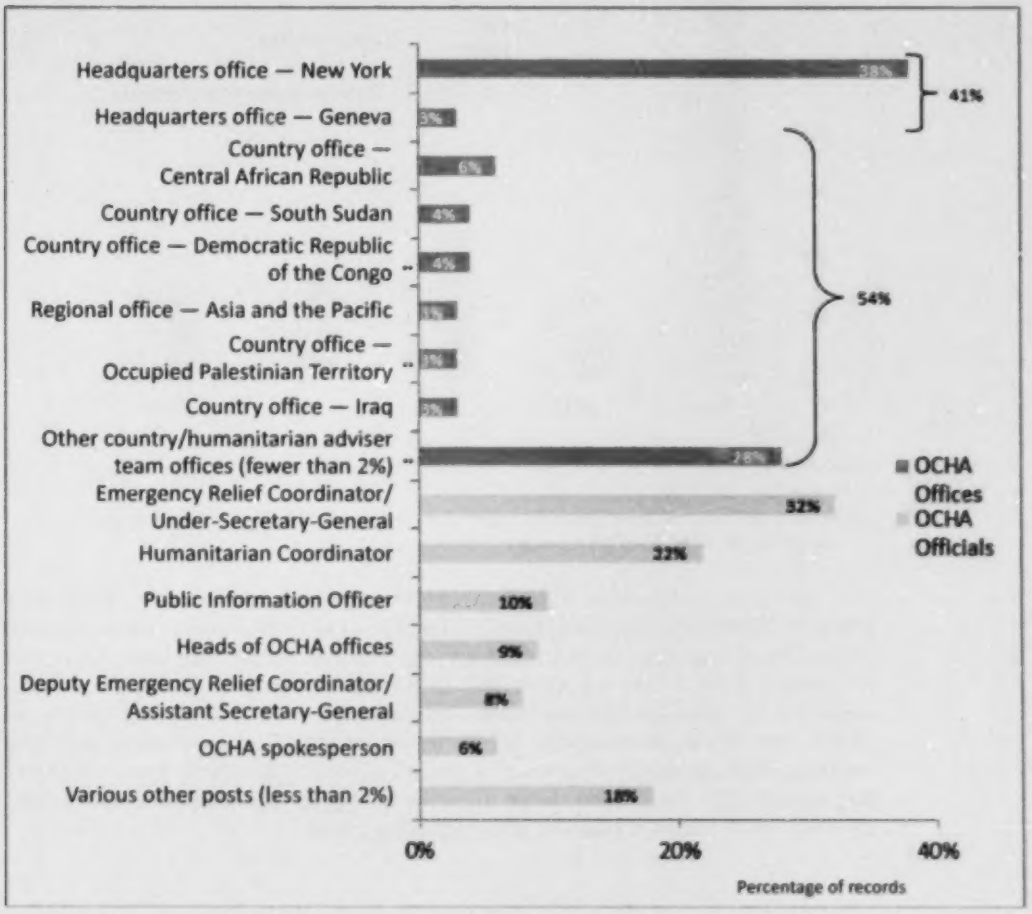
20. Given that private advocacy interventions were largely undocumented and therefore difficult to measure or verify, most evidence in respect of such efforts came from anecdotal self-reports by OCHA staff at all levels; however, some accounts could be verified through documentary evidence, and multiple interviewees added to the credibility of those claims. In addition, OCHA conducted an extensive advocacy mapping exercise at the outset of the evaluation to demonstrate the extent of the advocacy efforts. By contrast, there were extensive data on public advocacy efforts, which were catalogued and assessed (see para. 17 (e) above).

21. The many press releases and statements generated by OCHA were produced extensively across the Office. Figure III summarizing the distribution of known

[15] Boston Consulting Group and MANNET, OCHA Functional Review: Final Report, 29 July 2016.
[16] Ibid., pp. 3 and 10.

public advocacy outputs and figure IV illustrating the types of advocacy releases per year corroborate the claim that advocacy was a significant, and OCHA-wide, endeavour.

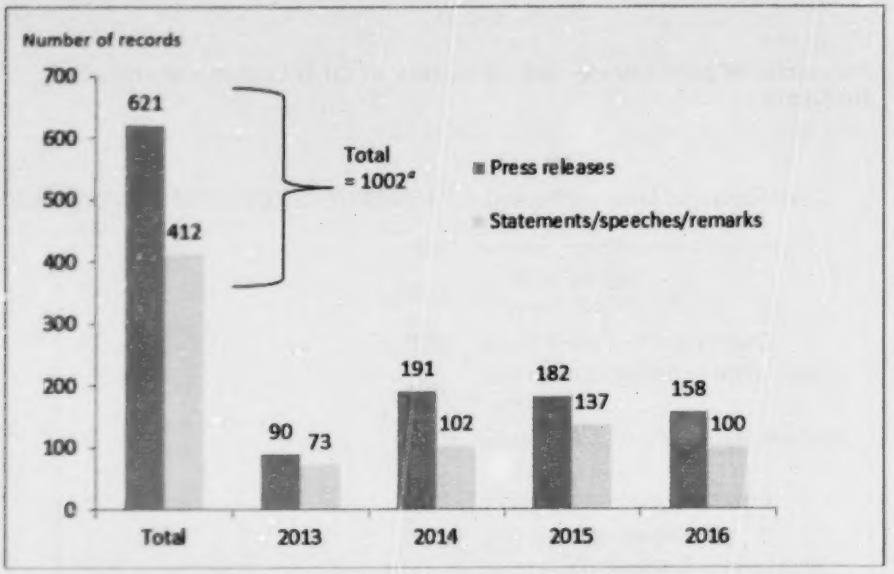
Figure III
Percentage of press releases and statements, by OCHA office and officials, 2013-2016



Source: OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division database of OCHA press releases and statements, 2013-2016.

Note: Base = 1,002 (all records); totals do not sum to 100 per cent due to rounding and to multiple responses being accepted.

Figure IV
Number and type of public advocacy press releases and statements, 2013-2016

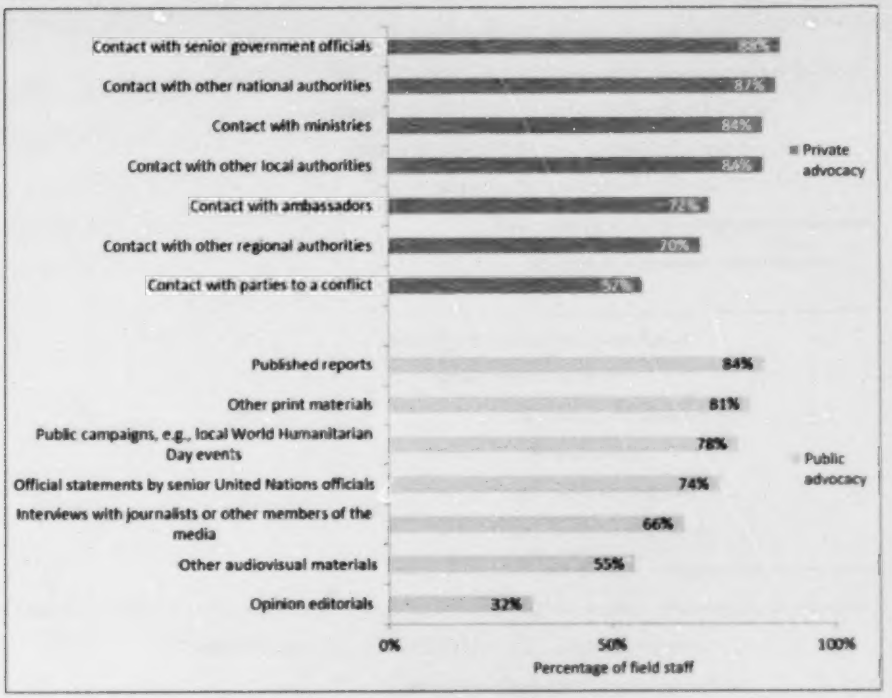


Source: OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division database of OCHA press releases and statements, 2013-2016.

[a] While 1,002 records were coded, the chart does not sum to 1,002 owing to multiple categories applying to some records.

22. Advocacy activity was widespread, although private advocacy was likely more prevalent than public advocacy. One OCHA official at Headquarters summarized the perception of numerous OCHA interviewees: "For every public advocacy piece that is counted, there is several times that in private advocacy." That claim is well-supported by interview data and case study analysis, with interviewed staff in all OCHA field offices, humanitarian adviser teams and headquarters locations providing concrete, often numerous, examples of private advocacy. Similarly, Figure V shows that among field staff alone, large majorities engaged in both public and private advocacy, with the most frequent activities being private.

Figure V
OCHA field staff self-reported public and private advocacy activities, 2013-2016



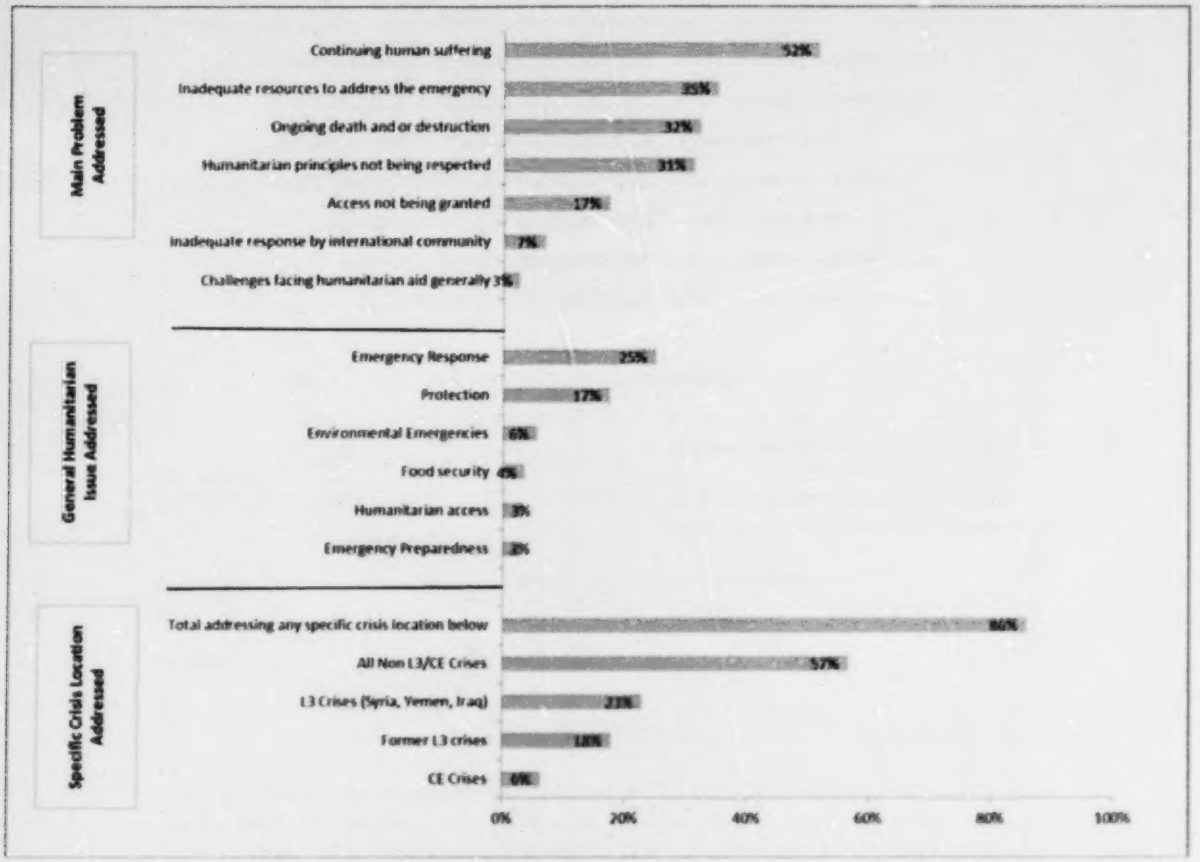
Source: OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division compilation of survey data.

23. This Office-wide advocacy effort entailed the allocation of significant time and resources (see paras. 9-11 above). Moreover, case studies and field office interviews suggested that advocacy was an integral component of the achievement of the broader objectives of these offices.

Advocacy addressed a wide range of humanitarian crises and issues

24. Interviews, desk reviews and media search data indicate that both public and private advocacy efforts addressed a wide range of humanitarian crises and issues. Among public advocacy efforts, 86 per cent addressed specific humanitarian crises, with level 3 emergencies receiving more attention than other crises. Figure VI identifies the main categories of public advocacy.

Figure VI
Main problems, issues and crises addressed by OCHA press releases and statements, 2013-2016



Source: OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division database of OCHA press releases and statements.
Notes: Base = 1,002 (all records); figure presents top mentions only; totals do not sum to 100 due to rounding and to multiple responses being accepted; Former L3 = former Inter-Agency Standing Committee level 3 emergency during 2013-2016.
Abbreviations: CE, corporate emergency; L3, Inter-Agency Standing Committee level 3 emergency.

Alignment of advocacy to OCHA mandate and value-add of OCHA advocacy were widely recognized

25. The structural arrangements, normative framework and investment of time and resources to undertake or support advocacy speak to the close alignment with this core aspect of the OCHA mandate. Internal and external stakeholders recognized the importance and appropriateness of the advocacy aspect of the OCHA mandate, which they viewed as a "public good" for the wider humanitarian system in addition to aiding OCHA. Although it did not explore advocacy in depth, the 2016 Functional Review echoed that sentiment.[17]

[17] See p. 4.

26. External interviewees acknowledged that OCHA occupied a unique advocacy niche, specifically in the following ways:

(a) **Systems-level focus.** Whereas United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were focused on specific populations or issues in humanitarian crises, OCHA, uniquely, collected and analysed information at a holistic, systems-level and used it to advocate on behalf of the humanitarian system, while also sharing the information with the other United Nations agencies and NGOs for use in their own advocacy and programmatic work;

(b) **Unbiased motivation.** Given that OCHA is not an operational entity, its information products (for example, maps, reports, analyses) were viewed as unbiased, which: (i) enabled the humanitarian community, and those to whom they advocate, to consistently use shared information; and (ii) safeguarded the relationships of operational actors with host Governments, given that OCHA had no direct operations to risk;

(c) **High-level access.** The field presence of OCHA staff was viewed as helping OCHA to build and sustain relationships with host country officials, NGOs, United Nations agencies, diplomatic staff and parties to conflict,[18] and its access to senior levels of Member States and the Security Council, through the Office of the Under-Secretary-General, was viewed as a valuable channel for conveying vital information on shared humanitarian concerns.

27. Accordingly, partners reported using OCHA information products for advocacy and other purposes. Evidence from interviews and case studies suggested that OCHA products and analyses were well-used and its briefings well-attended by the humanitarian and diplomatic communities. Humanitarian coordinators frequently indicated that their advocacy efforts were well-supported by OCHA information products, for example, in regional outlooks, country updates and maps of humanitarian needs.[19] The Functional Review similarly concluded that OCHA information products were perceived as useful.[20]

Advocacy efforts were deemed relevant, notwithstanding challenges in sustaining attention to protracted crises

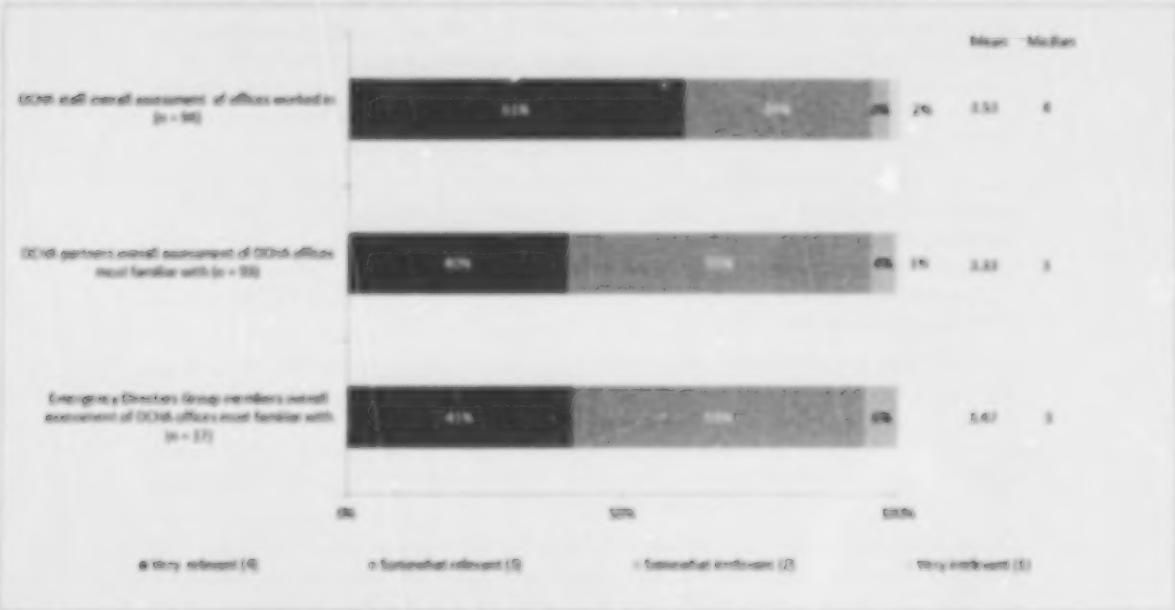
28. All groups perceived OCHA advocacy on humanitarian issues and on specific crises as relevant. Partners in all case study locations, interviewees from OCHA offices and external stakeholders largely considered OCHA to be providing timely and relevant advocacy on key humanitarian issues (for example, funding for emergencies, access, protection of aid workers and respect for international humanitarian law and norms). Specific examples included work to restore humanitarian access in Jordan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, using common data on the blockade in Gaza and denouncing the targeting of aid workers in the Central African Republic. However, OCHA partner and Emergency Directors Group survey respondents were more likely than field staff to consider OCHA advocacy as "somewhat" rather than "very" relevant (see figure VII).

[18] Field presence is not a source of value-add unique to OCHA, given that many other entities have a field presence.

[19] Others included the Lake Chad Basin: Crisis Overview; Sahel: A Call for Humanitarian Aid; Mali Access/Security Plan; and El Niño material used in Ethiopia, Fiji and elsewhere.

[20] See p. 21.

Figure VII
Field staff and partner assessments of the relevance of OCHA advocacy, 2013-2016



Source: OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division surveys of OCHA staff, partners and Emergency Directors Group members.

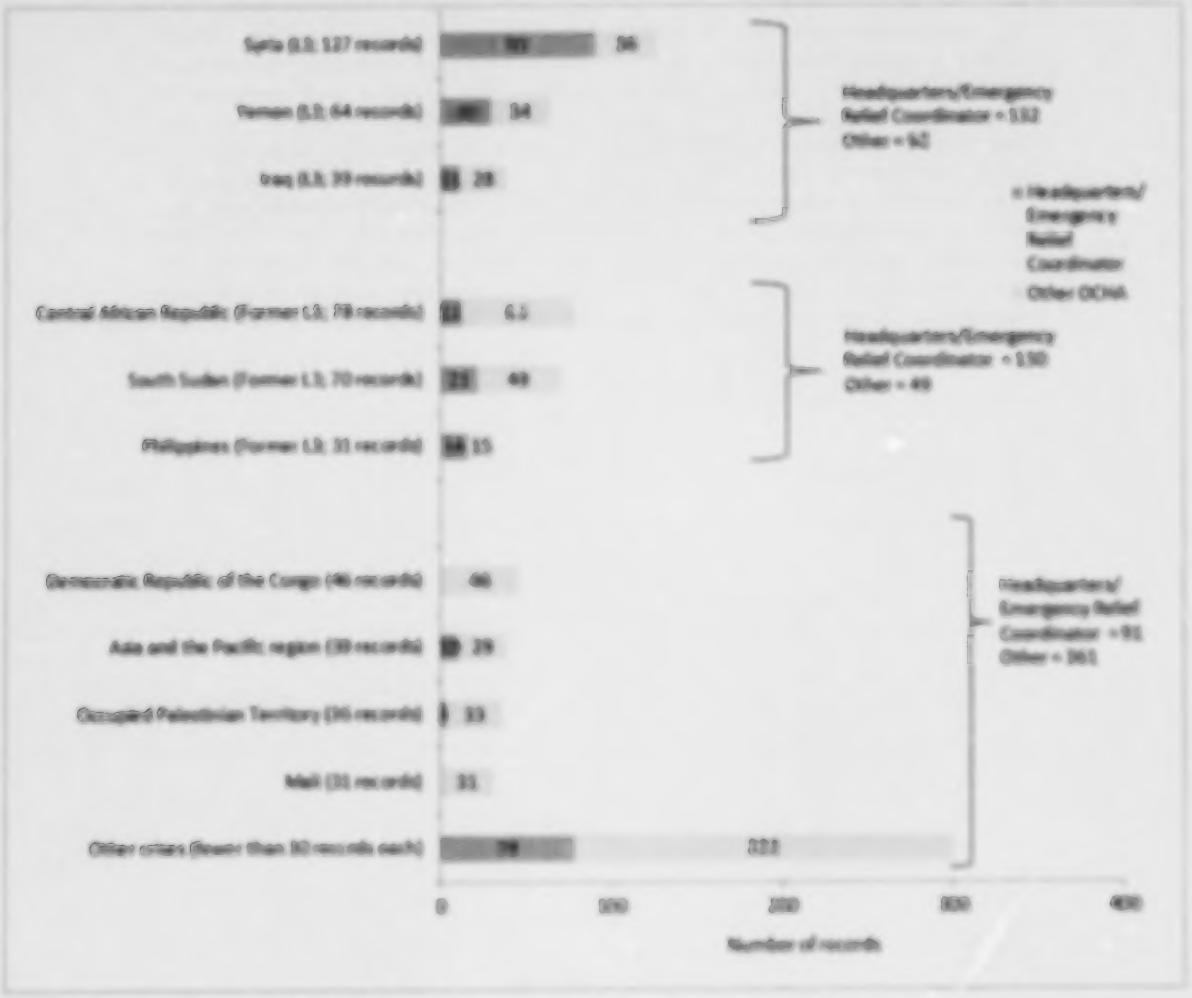
29. One dimension of relevance that was frequently highlighted was the delicate balance that OCHA often aimed to strike in linking the public and private aspects of its advocacy work towards a given goal. In that respect, interviewees painted a mixed picture. On the one hand, they frequently cited the complementarity that OCHA staff achieved between the two types of advocacy, carefully thinking through which type would work best in a given country or situational context and when to use the other. Private advocacy, built on relationships developed between OCHA and key stakeholders, including senior governmental officials, was noted as the preferable option in most cases, given that it was likely to preserve the trust between OCHA and those actors.

30. On the other hand, stakeholders highlighted instances where OCHA had made trade-offs in its public and private advocacy by softening or withholding public advocacy messages more than some partners would have liked. In two case studies, the political context prompted OCHA to carefully choose the issues on which it would advocate to the Government. OCHA field staff and humanitarian adviser teams described a constant tension in determining how far they should advocate publicly versus what the humanitarian community would like them to say in public. They explained that OCHA was as bold as it could be in public in most cases, adding that more forceful public messaging risked alienating OCHA, and its partners, from the host Government, with potentially harmful consequences for affected populations. In other scenarios, OCHA undertook forceful private advocacy to compensate for lighter-touch public advocacy, which those involved claimed

went largely unseen by the rest of the humanitarian community. OCHA field interviewees and external experts suggested that, in some of those cases, Headquarters could undertake more forceful public and private advocacy on specific field-level issues without jeopardizing the working relationships in the host country.

31. Interviewees cited few significant gaps in coverage: they generally viewed OCHA as having advocated on the crises and issues where its messaging was most needed. That was consistent with the positive but mixed overall appraisal of relevance highlighted earlier. However, one criticism centred on the disproportionate allocation of OCHA attention and resources to the major crises at hand. As shown in figure VIII, Headquarters and Emergency Relief Coordinator press releases and statements focused heavily on the Syrian Arab Republic and other level 3 emergencies. Nearly all interviewees conceded that that focus was justifiable, given the seriousness of the crises. However, they also noted that the focus was at odds with the Office's role of bringing attention to all salient crises — both extant "forgotten" crises and emerging crises not sufficiently salient to key stakeholders.

Figure VIII
Public advocacy outputs, OCHA headquarters and Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator and rest of OCHA, top 10 crises, 2013-2016



Source: OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division database of OCHA press releases and statements.
Note: L3 = Inter-agency Standing Committee level 3 emergency; Former L3 = former Inter-agency Standing Committee level 3 emergency during 2013-2016.

12. A minority of staff interviewees, as well as external thought leaders and members of the Emergency Directors Group, suggested discontent over a perceived lack of public advocacy for forgotten crises, claiming that OCHA did not appear to have a systematic approach to sustaining public or donor interest in such crises. The 2015 OCHA Corporate Advocacy Strategy does not include this issue area among its goals. Some staff were aware of the issue and indicated that future efforts would address the gap. A handful of concrete examples of OCHA publicly drawing

attention to forgotten crises did, however, emerge in the present evaluation. For example, in the 2016 OCHA Year in Review, it is stated that in order to draw attention to the crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, OCHA organized an event during the General Assembly that resulted in $163 million in pledges from world leaders.[21] The appointments of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel and the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General on El Niño and Climate were noted as positive developments that promised to bring attention to those crises. The country-based pooled funds and the Central Emergency Response Fund have also sought to draw and sustain attention to forgotten crises.

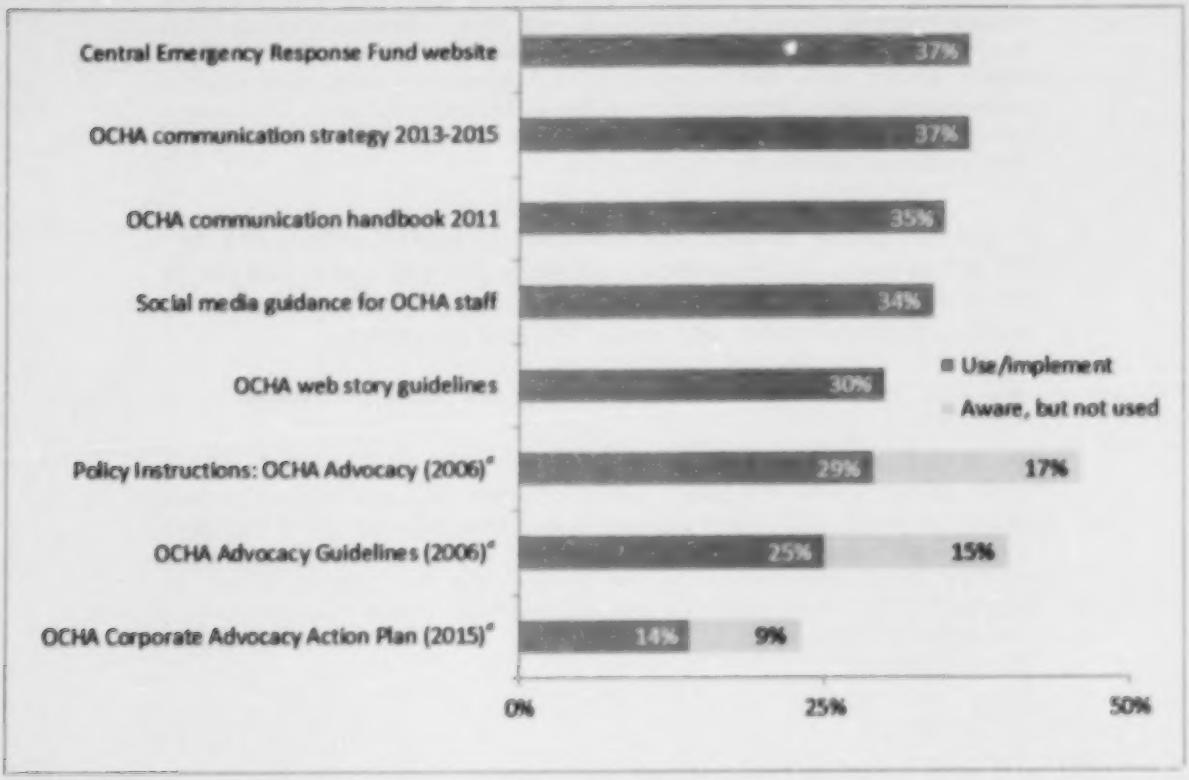
B. Corporate policy, strategy and guidance documents existed to help OCHA to carry out its advocacy mandate, but awareness and use of those documents were low, contributing in part to uncoordinated advocacy efforts within and across levels of the Office

Awareness and use of corporate policy, strategy and guidance documents were low

33. OCHA headquarters developed numerous corporate documents to help to carry out its advocacy work (see para. 9 above). However, awareness and use of these seminal documents were low at all levels of the Office. When probed in interviews, very few staff involved in advocacy-related work at any level of OCHA reported knowing about, much less relying on, these sources for guidance. Figure IX summarizes this low awareness — and even lower use — of key advocacy-related documents among field staff.

[21] See "OCHA 2016 Year in Review", January 2017, available from http://www.unocha.org/2016_year_in_review?utm_source=OCHA+Global+Product+List&utm_campaign=e3ee92c035-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2016_12_23&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_fdc5b4f7e9-e3ee92c035-328330409&mp.

Figure IX
Percentage of OCHA field staff involved in advocacy reporting awareness and use of advocacy guidance



Source: OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division compilation of OCHA staff survey data.
Note: Base = 82 (all staff respondents).
[a] Asked about awareness and use.

34. Some of the guidance was either dated (for example, the 2006 Policy Instruction and Advocacy Guidelines) or not sufficiently rolled out throughout the Office.[22] In November 2016, the Coordination and Response Division disseminated guidance to the field (i.e., humanitarian country team advocacy strategies, October 2016), but staff interviewees, including those with significant advocacy roles, were largely unaware of even that recent guidance. Asked to pinpoint why awareness and use might be low, numerous interviewees cited ineffective roll-out at Headquarters, where they raised concerns about a lack of internal organizational cohesion among the divisions, and their leadership, in managing the advocacy function.

35. Beyond Headquarters, staff cited the lack of uniform distribution of corporate guidance by OCHA heads of office. The Functional Review echoed that feedback,

[22] Since the issuance of the 2006 Policy Instruction and Advocacy Guidelines, significant changes have occurred in the humanitarian system in which OCHA plays a leading role, in the funding environment and in technology.

citing management-level issues as a wider challenge[23]. Not surprisingly, while the humanitarian response plan and the humanitarian needs overview were used to varying degrees to help to guide advocacy, there was little evidence of specific advocacy strategies (outside of communication plans) within field offices. In fact, a recent OCHA analysis indicated that only 5 out of 29 country offices were implementing humanitarian-endorsed advocacy strategies.[24] Similarly, humanitarian adviser teams reported not working with specific advocacy strategies.

OCHA advocacy efforts were characterized by insufficient internal coordination

36. Advocacy is not a stand-alone function, but rather one intended to reinforce other areas of the OCHA mandate. OCHA, as an entity with a coordination mandate, needed to connect the disparate strands of advocacy being undertaken at a given time — and within and across levels of the entity, the disparate advocacy efforts — in a cohesive, coherent and complementary manner. The need for this coordinated approach was further underlined by the continuing resource constraints under which OCHA operated: in the face of scarcity, it is vital that OCHA allocate its resources judiciously to avoid inefficiency (see General Assembly resolution 69/264). Feedback at all levels suggested that there was no formal mechanism in place to coordinate those disparate advocacy efforts.

37. The lack of a formal coordination mechanism characterized the relationship among the various levels of OCHA (i.e., vertical coordination), as well as within individual levels (i.e., horizontal coordination). Feedback on each of those levels centred on the following issues:

(a) **Vertical coordination**. These mechanisms relied on some direct reporting requirements between field offices and desk offices at OCHA, but were based mainly on the strength of personal relationships between individuals;

(b) **Horizontal coordination**. Interviewees were concerned about a lack of internal coordination at Headquarters, which they believed had hindered the ability to amplify their messages from country offices.

38. Advocacy is the only one of the five mandated functions of OCHA that lacks a specific framework around which to convene the entity in pursuit of shared corporate advocacy objectives: the broad advocacy objectives it will pursue during a given strategic planning cycle (both in its own right and in support of the four other mandated functions), how the various divisions and levels of the entity will work together towards those goals, which operational units will be accountable for specific aspects of implementation, and how OCHA will know whether it has achieved its advocacy objectives quantitatively and qualitatively throughout the implementation period. Headquarters interviewees referred to several efforts to create advocacy strategies that had been hampered by disagreement over which organizational unit should lead the effort, the need for extensive internal consultation and changing priorities of senior managers. While some internal interviewees referenced senior management committees that coordinate OCHA advocacy, there was no clear authority on advocacy.

[23] See pages 6 and 40.

[24] See OCHA, Information Product Overview Report Cycle 9, 2015, p. 8.

39. External interviewees and surveyed Emergency Directors Group members frequently suggested a need for a forum where OCHA could discuss and coordinate its advocacy efforts across the Office, or at least on specific issues. Those stakeholders, along with OCHA staff, noted significant organizational silos between branches at Headquarters as the main impediment to connecting efforts. The Functional Review corroborated those observations, suggesting that they might be emblematic of a broader need for strengthened coordination, including a clearer delineation of roles and responsibilities in other areas of the Office's work.[25] It also concluded that the OCHA management model was in need of restructuring to make the entity more efficient and effective, noting that it was lacking key components and interconnections and the leadership team did not work well together."[26]

Demand existed for enhanced strategic direction under the leadership of Headquarters

40. A small minority of senior-level Headquarters interviewees expressed scepticism that a more formalized approach to guidance and internal coordination would strengthen the advocacy efforts of OCHA. Those stakeholders pointed to the ongoing success of OCHA advocacy (see paras. 47-48 below), despite no formal strategic direction from Headquarters, as an indication that its relatively minimalist approach was fit for purpose. In addition, they claimed that a more formal framework of guidance and coordination would introduce an unnecessary — and heavy — layer of bureaucracy that might further overburden staff and undermine the advocacy effort. That scepticism persisted notwithstanding countervailing evidence. For example, OCHA continued to maintain and to produce related policy, strategy and guidance documents up until 2016; advocacy remained the only one of the five mandated functions deliberately lacking the aforementioned framework, with no clear or explicit rationale for being the exception to the rule; the Functional Review highlighted insufficient internal coordination as a key hindrance to organizational performance (see paras. 49 and 53 below); and ongoing resource constraints underline the need for OCHA, like any entity facing such constraints, to be as prudent and deliberate as possible in allocating its limited human and financial resources (see para. 36 above).

41. Feedback from others involved in advocacy presented a more amenable perspective, indicating that enhanced strategic direction, both in the form of strengthened coordination and clearer guidance, might be welcomed. External and internal stakeholders alike observed many opportunities to improve coordination. Examples include:

- The Policy Development and Studies Branch does not have enough direct access to field offices, which has led to the observation from the field that policy analyses are not always sufficiently linked to field issues
- Input from Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooling fund managers not always sought on broader advocacy efforts through which those funds could be promoted

[25] See Functional Review of OCHA, p. 40.
[26] See ibid., p. 6

- Field office heads have not been sufficiently updated on Emergency Management Committee meeting decisions.

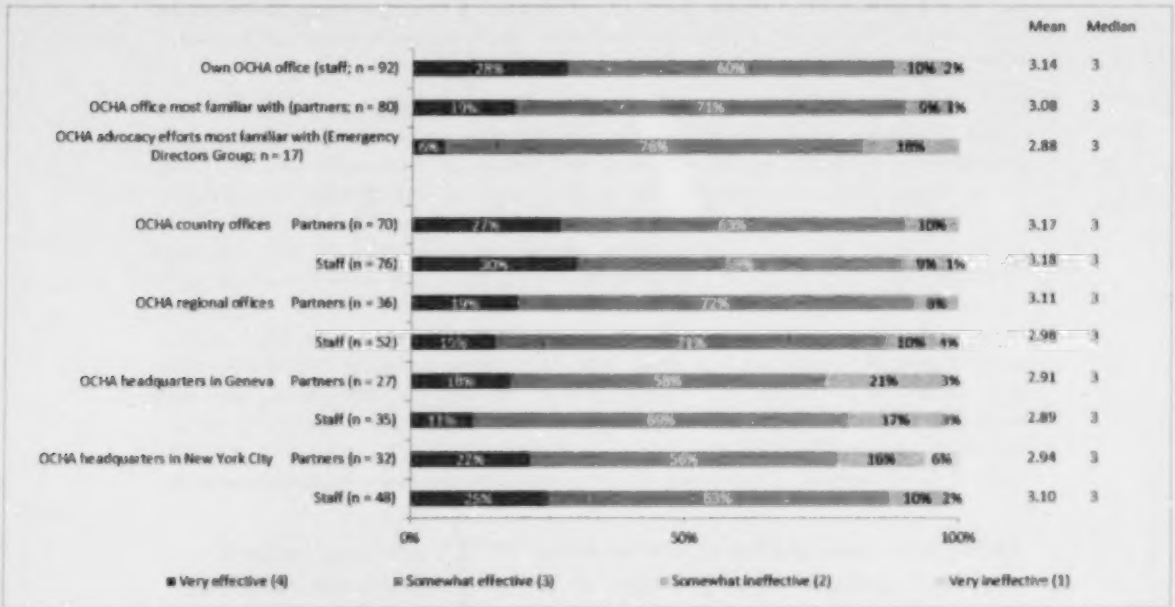
42. OCHA advocacy efforts were supported by a combination of experienced staff and strong relationships within the Office. There was a risk that where relationships were less formalized and as staff changed roles, the interconnectedness of advocacy efforts across OCHA could break down.

43. Similarly, with regard to guidance, those involved in advocacy suggested that a policy, strategy, guidance and capacity development were still needed. Field staff interviewees, humanitarian adviser teams and humanitarian coordinators, including those whose roles were marked by a high level of engagement in advocacy, described the core skills required to be a successful advocate. Such core skills, they asserted, were not necessarily those sought or cultivated in the standard Humanitarian Affairs Officer profile under which most staff were classified. Such specialized skills included persuasive and customized writing, diplomacy, negotiation and relationship-building, often targeted to senior-level actors. Accordingly, they claimed that while such skills were partially self-taught, some also needed to be developed through greater capacity-building among key staff expected to successfully advocate. OCHA field interviewees and case studies indicated very little guidance in that area. However, when Headquarters advocacy support was requested, it was generally provided, considered useful and appreciated.

C. There was some evidence that specific OCHA advocacy efforts positively influenced knowledge, awareness and decision-making

44. Figure X shows that the majority of OCHA field staff, partners and Emergency Directors Group members surveyed perceived OCHA advocacy efforts at all levels to be relatively effective. That said, these assessments of the overall advocacy effect and those of specific offices were much more likely to be moderate than strong.

Figure X
Perceived effectiveness of OCHA offices by staff, partners and Emergency Directors Group members, 2013-2016



Source: OCHA staff, partner and Emergency Directors Group surveys.

45. As noted previously, measuring the effectiveness of OCHA specific advocacy efforts, especially those of private advocacy, is inherently difficult. Low awareness and use of existing strategies and policies, coupled with the uncoordinated approach to implementation, rendered such measurement even more difficult. Without a clear, consolidated and documented overview of who had undertaken which advocacy efforts on a given humanitarian crisis or issue at a given time, the results of such actions could not be monitored or measured. The Strategic Planning, Evaluation and Guidance Section of the Office planned to review OCHA advocacy in 2015, but that review was cancelled.

46. Despite this measurement gap, indicative examples of the effects of OCHA advocacy were culled, and the causal linkages between OCHA advocacy and its effects verified, through a combination of stakeholder interviews and, wherever possible, documentary evidence. This analysis yielded examples of effective advocacy that contributed to the enhancement of humanitarian action as well as examples of mixed results where external and internal factors had hampered the full attainment of targeted results.

47. Examples of OCHA advocacy positively enhancing knowledge, awareness and decisions clustered around two main areas:

(a) **Influencing normative discussion and debate on humanitarian issues**. OCHA public and private efforts to incorporate normative standards into key

intergovernmental policies and legislation yielded positive results in several instances. Examples include the African Union Humanitarian Policy Framework; the European Union Trust Fund for Africa and the ongoing work supporting the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection on humanitarian policy; and the memorandum of understanding between the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and OCHA on cooperation on humanitarian affairs issues;

(b) **Negotiating humanitarian access with key actors**. Case studies and field interviews provided examples of effective OCHA-led advocacy approaches to negotiate, maintain and monitor humanitarian access. In particular, the Mali country office access strategy and plan were widely viewed as key to facilitating humanitarian access. Humanitarian access advocacy was similarly widely viewed as having been successful in Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan. Efforts in the Syrian Arab Republic contributed to the Security Council resolution on humanitarian access in that country (see para. 48 (b) below).

48. Examples of OCHA advocacy having mixed results in enhancing knowledge, awareness and decisions clustered around four main areas:

(a) **Role of the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator as chief advocate in boldly speaking out on more crises (see ST/SGB/1999/8, sect. 3.2 (e))**. Partners, Emergency Directors Group members,[27] and external thought leaders, as well as the Functional Review,[28] pointed to the pivotal role of the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator in enabling OCHA and the wider humanitarian system to achieve their goals. That role was seen as effective when a strong stance was taken on humanitarian crises, international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles, for example, attacks on aid workers in South Sudan and violations of international humanitarian law in the Syrian Arab Republic. However, those efforts were viewed as lacking in some instances. For example, external thought leaders noted the need for a stronger stance by OCHA, given the continuing erosion of respect for international humanitarian law, concerns in respect of the protection of civilians, and continuing access challenges in some countries. Given the role and stature of the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator as chief advocate, those efforts were invariably received clearly (if not always positively) by target audiences, including Member States. This perception is consistent with the admonition by stakeholders that OCHA should speak up more boldly, not just on the most urgent crises, but also on "forgotten" crises (see paras. 31-32 above);

(b) **Informing Security Council deliberations**. The access of OCHA to the Security Council was widely viewed as critical to informing deliberations and decisions at the highest levels of the humanitarian system. As a result of briefings by the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator from 2013 to 2016, for example, on South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Yemen, Council resolutions were adopted on those crises, notably resolution 2165 (2014) on the Syrian Arab Republic. The Functional Review,[29] the evaluation of the OCHA

[27] A total of 53 per cent of respondents noted that there had been missed opportunities with respect to assuming a stronger voice in advocacy efforts.

[28] See pp. 17 and 24.

[29] See pp. 19 and 58.

response to the Syrian crisis[30] and external thought leaders concurred that OCHA advocacy had contributed significantly to that resolution, even if humanitarian access remained a challenge. In addition, OCHA advocated on such cross-cutting issues as the protection of civilians and the safety of aid workers. OCHA repeatedly briefed the informal protection of civilians expert group and the Council on protection of civilian issues. External thought leaders characterized that advocacy as extremely important, noting that OCHA advocacy informed biannual discussion on the subject. OCHA also advocated on the safety and security of humanitarian aid workers,[31] with General Assembly resolutions 68/101, 68/102 and 71/129 and Council resolutions 1502 (2003) and 2175 (2014) being adopted on that issue. Emergency Directors Group members noted that such efforts were critical. Owing to political factors outside the control of OCHA, however, the resulting actions following those resolutions did not always lead to the desired outcomes;

(c) **Obtaining financing to meet the full scale of humanitarian needs**. Cognizant of growing humanitarian need and funding requirements, OCHA continued to advocate for adequate financing, despite widely acknowledged donor fatigue. Interviewees largely viewed those efforts as somewhat effective, given that funding requirements had not been fully met. Emergency Directors Group members viewed OCHA advocacy for resource mobilization as either very effective (28.6 per cent) or somewhat effective (71.4 per cent). External thought leaders also saw OCHA advocacy as effective in advancing changes in the humanitarian financing architecture, such as the country-based pooled funds and the Central Emergency Response Fund;

(d) **World Humanitarian Summit**. Various stakeholder groups held mixed views on the effectiveness of OCHA advocacy on this touchstone event. Field-based staff, partners and stakeholders perceived the process leading up to the Summit, including the consultation process and summative reports, as well as the Summit itself, to have been a useful and successful advocacy effort, given that it focused on critical humanitarian issues. Those farther away from the field largely viewed the Summit as less successfull, given that the purpose of the post-Summit consultations seemingly shifted and follow-up has been slow, with less tangible outcomes compared with the pre-Summit consultative process and related advocacy. One key outcome touted as a major success of the event, the "Grand Bargain" (i.e., an agreed series of reforms to humanitarian financing), was the result of negotiations launched prior to the Summit; moreover, its ramifications, although not insignificant, were not universally viewed by internal or external interviewees as the highest-level ambition that the Summit could have achieved.[32]

[30] Available from https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OCHA%20Syria%20Evaluation%20Report_FINAL.pdf.

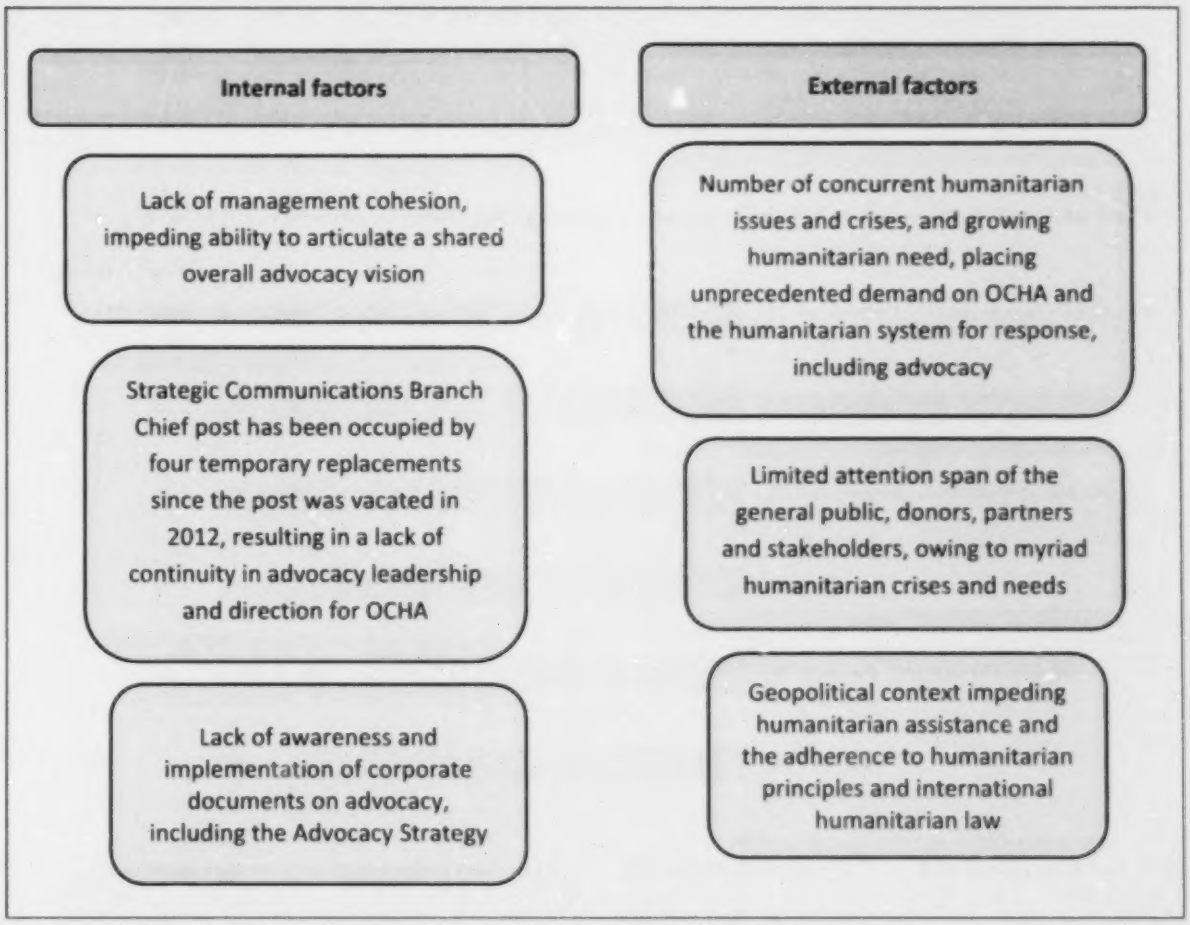
[31] See https://aidworkersecurity.org/incidents/report/summary. The highest number of incidents since 2005 occurred in 2013 (265); in 2014, there were 190 and in 2015, there were 148.

[32] *Is the Grand Bargain a big deal?* IRIN News, 24 May 2016. Available from http://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2016/05/24/grand-bargain-big-deal.

Numerous factors influenced advocacy outcomes, and the ability to address them was limited, owing to a lack of overarching planning

49. Across all data sources, the effectiveness of OCHA advocacy efforts was perceived to have been affected by numerous factors internal and external to OCHA, as summarized in figure XI below.

Figure XI
Key factors influencing the advocacy effectiveness of OCHA


Internal factors
External factors
Lack of management cohesion, impeding ability to articulate a shared overall advocacy vision
Strategic Communications Branch Chief post has been occupied by four temporary replacements since the post was vacated in 2012, resulting in a lack of continuity in advocacy leadership and direction for OCHA
Lack of awareness and implementation of corporate documents on advocacy, including the Advocacy Strategy
Number of concurrent humanitarian issues and crises, and growing humanitarian need, placing unprecedented demand on OCHA and the humanitarian system for response, including advocacy
Limited attention span of the general public, donors, partners and stakeholders, owing to myriad humanitarian crises and needs
Geopolitical context impeding humanitarian assistance and the adherence to humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law

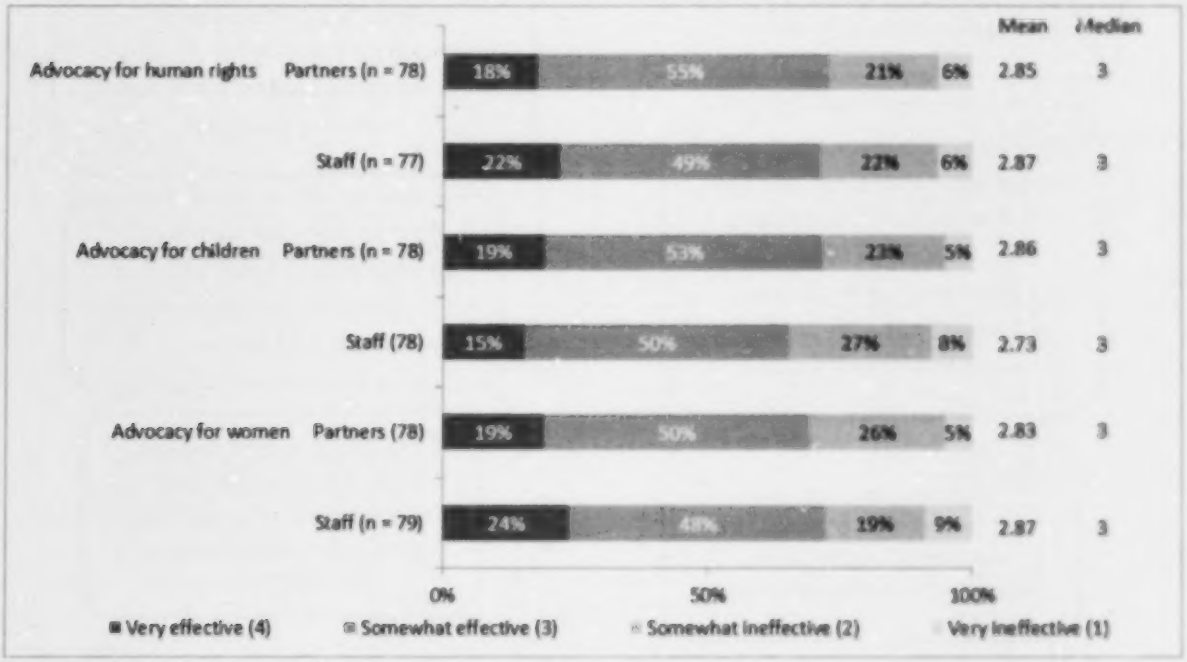
Source: OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division compilation of interview and open-ended survey responses, desk reviews and case studies.

50. OCHA has the most direct control over internal factors given that it is able to plan and change accordingly, to mitigate their impact. Conversely, OCHA has little control over external factors but planning aids in mitigating their impact.

OCHA incorporated humanitarian principles and cross-cutting messaging to varying degrees in its advocacy

51. Among public advocacy efforts, children and gender issues received the most attention. A review of advocacy outputs showed those issues to have been the most frequently noted in public advocacy outputs. Interviewees in field offices and at Headquarters suggested that the incorporation of children's issues was relatively straightforward, but that gender and other issues depended on the support provided to the OCHA office. For example, interviews and case studies suggested that offices with a gender adviser, who could analyse data from that angle and craft appropriate advocacy messages, tended to be more successful in addressing gender issues. External interviewees generally believed OCHA to have successfully incorporated cross-cutting issues when it was asked specifically to do so. Figure XII indicates that survey respondents corroborated those generally positive views.

Figure XII
Partner and staff perceptions of OCHA integrating cross-cutting issues in advocacy, 2013-2016



Source: OCHA staff, partner and Emergency Directors Group surveys.

D. While OCHA has dedicated resources to the advocacy function, it has not efficiently harnessed those resources to maximize results

52. An assessment of how OCHA has managed the many internal resources involved in advocacy at all levels (see paras. 11 and 20-21) revealed a mixed picture. On the one hand, OCHA dedicated resources to certain aspects of advocacy:

at Headquarters, the Strategic Communications Branch was vested with overall responsibility for public advocacy, and in field offices, Public Information Officers led public advocacy efforts and supported private advocacy efforts. On the other hand, the lack of vertical and horizontal coordination, under the leadership of the chief advocate, constituted an important source of inefficiency, as did the investment in developing policies, strategies and guidance that were not sufficiently rolled out, known or used (see paras. 9 and 34). At both levels, efficiency gaps extended beyond that overarching lack of coordination.

53. At Headquarters, a key senior-level post, Chief of the Strategic Communications Branch, has been occupied by four temporary replacements since the post was vacated in 2012; the recruitment process to fill the post has not yet been completed. Key internal and external interviewees highlighted that the vacancy has resulted in a lack of continuity of leadership in this key advocacy role. The gap could account in part for the insufficient strategic direction on advocacy or in the specific aspects for which the Branch is directly responsible.

54. At the country level, there were 48 Public Information Officers at varying staff levels in all but eight OCHA field presence offices in 2016.[37] In offices without Public Information Officers, public information responsibilities may be undertaken by other OCHA staff. Public Information Officers were viewed by OCHA and partners as valuable resources for supporting advocacy. OCHA staff and partners in the case studies outlined advocacy examples, verifiable by tangible advocacy outputs, that Public Information Officers had led or supported for OCHA and humanitarian adviser teams. However, the Public Information Officers were not linked formally to the Strategic Communications Branch, given that field offices reported to the Coordination and Response Division. Any requests by Public Information Officers for public information support, guidance or direction were made on an ad hoc basis, rather than being structurally linked to the Strategic Communications Branch as the main Headquarters advocacy link let alone to a wider strategy (see paras. 32-43 above).

55. Despite the lack of overall advocacy direction from Headquarters, field offices and humanitarian adviser teams did report employing workarounds that aided them in their efforts. They acknowledged, however, that field-level strategies that linked with, and were guided by, an overall Headquarters plus would aid their work. Case studies and field office interview data outlined the various advocacy tools and mechanisms to coordinate and guide efforts at the local level, for example, communication and advocacy workplans and working groups, defining key messages and creating core advocacy products for use by OCHA and others (such as regional outlooks and OCHA core information products such as bulletins, dashboards, snapshots and situation reports).

V. Conclusion

56. Advocacy constitutes an integral aspect of the OCHA mandate. Accordingly, the Office has developed a suite of tools, from policy and strategy documents to guidance,

[37] Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Turkey and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

to help it to manage the advocacy function. It has also invested resources, including dedicated public advocacy staff at Headquarters and Public Information Officers at the field level. In addition, many other staff at all levels of the Office undertook a wide array of public and private advocacy activities covering a broad range of humanitarian issues and specific crises. Some of those efforts also yielded well-evidenced results, despite the significant external constraints that OCHA faces in its work.

57. Notwithstanding its importance, advocacy is the one core aspect of its mandate for which OCHA has not implemented a coherent, cohesive framework as the basis for providing overall strategic direction in this vital area. After investing in its suite of tools, it did not adequately roll them out. It has insufficient coordination mechanisms in place through which to set advocacy priorities, jointly plan and connect complementary advocacy efforts across its operations, manage internal and external challenges and risks, and monitor and report on those efforts, under the leadership of its chief advocate, the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator. In addition, a senior-level advocacy post has been occupied by four temporary replacements since the post was vacated in 2012.

58. Some might surmise that, because the current advocacy efforts are largely relevant and some examples have yielded results, nothing in the approach taken by OCHA needs to be altered. However, the evidence in the present evaluation points to several areas in which OCHA might improve. While a more deliberate and strategic approach will not always lead to better results on every advocacy effort, it could help OCHA to become even more relevant, more effective and more efficient within its limited, and increasingly stretched, resources than its current approach affords. This observation is consistent with those of the 2016 Functional Review, which addressed the need for OCHA to become more efficient and streamlined.

VI. Recommendations

59. The OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division makes three important recommendations to OCHA, two of which OCHA has accepted and one of which it has partially accepted. The Division urges OCHA to ensure that recommendations 2 and 3, which entail longer time horizons, will be implemented in close alignment with the forthcoming 2018-2019 strategic framework and the 2018-2021 strategic framework for OCHA.

Recommendation 1 (Result D)

60. OCHA should complete the recruitment for the post of Chief of the Strategic Communications Branch.

Indicators: Recruitment process completed; post filled by qualified candidate

Recommendation 2 (Results B and D)

61. OCHA should consolidate its core Headquarters-based advocacy function under the leadership of, and demonstrating a clear reporting line to, the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator, as chief advocate. Accordingly, the Office of the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator should additionally establish (or subsume under an existing coordination forum) a

mechanism for the coordination of advocacy efforts within Headquarters, and between Headquarters and other levels of OCHA, as well as the implementation of recommendation 3. (This recommendation is consistent with the recommendation of the 2016 Functional Review (see page 80 of the Review)).

Indicators: Organization chart revised to demonstrate reporting lines indicated; internal mechanism established (or subsumed) and utilized to coordinate advocacy

Recommendation 3 (Result C)

62. OCHA should revisit, and update as necessary, its 2006 Advocacy Policy Instruction and Guidelines on OCHA Advocacy and its 2013-2017 Advocacy Strategy, through an internal and external consultation process and consideration of the experience gained since the issuance of those documents. It should then roll out the updated documents, ensure and monitor their implementation, and provide associated training and knowledge management support to ensure their broad use throughout the OCHA. The Advocacy Strategy for 2018 and beyond should include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- A current situation analysis contextualizing advocacy efforts in the years ahead
- Overarching advocacy goals and any specific objectives within those goals
- A plan for undertaking advocacy towards those goals and objectives for the entire range of humanitarian crises and issues (level 3 emergencies, corporate emergencies, protracted or forgotten crises, thematic or cross-cutting issues and international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles)
- An articulation of internal and external coordination mechanisms for how OCHA aims to achieve those goals and objectives
- Indicators for measuring achievement against those goals and objectives, and a monitoring framework for gauging performance against them

Indicators: Consultations; documents revisited and revised as necessary; roll-out and implementation activities; implementation monitored and reported on

(*Signed*) Heidi **Mendoza**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services
21 March 2017

Annex I

Formal comments provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

The full text of comments received from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on the evaluation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is presented below in line with the practice instituted by General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

Thank you for your memo of 22 February 2017, transmitting the draft report of OIOS on the programme evaluation of OCHA.

I appreciate the opportunity provided by your staff to contribute informal comments to a previous version of the report, the revisions made to the draft on the basis of those comments, and explanations of how the comments have been addressed.

OCHA would like to provide the following formal comments on the report:

The report provides OCHA's definition of "advocacy". However, it is not clearly specified in the report whether the evaluation is based on this definition. More clarity on the definition used for the evaluation would have been helpful. For example, important aspects of OCHA's advocacy role are advocating for respect for humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law. Advocacy could also include advocacy for humanitarian financing. These are not specified in the definition, and it is not clear whether the evaluation has considered them.

Although OCHA is aware of the limitations imposed by the word limit, further clarity on some of the methods employed to conduct this evaluation would have been helpful, in order to have a solid understanding of the strength of the findings, including: (a) clarification of the Bellwether analysis (how were humanitarian thought leaders selected, given that their opinion is used to substantiate findings in several parts of the report); (b) total number of survey respondents; and (c) details on the non-respondent bias analysis, including whether it considered the bias introduced by limiting the survey to field staff only.

Enclosed please find the plan of action and associated timetable for implementing the report recommendations.* Of the three recommendations provided in the report, OCHA accepts recommendations 1 and 3, and partially accepts recommendation 2, subject to the finalization of OCHA's Change Management Process currently under way and the recommendation from the Change Management Unit on OCHA's overall organizational design.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff, in particular Mr. Robert McCouch, Ms. Emily Hampton-Manley and Mr. Nicholas Koerbel, for their excellent collaboration throughout this process.

* The plan of action and associated timetable can be found in the files of the Secretariat.

Annex II

Response of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to the comments from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) thanks the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for its comments and would like to address the two outstanding points raised in the third paragraph of its memorandum contained in annex I.

With respect to the definition of advocacy used in the evaluation, the comments by OCHA management raise two distinct but related issues: (a) whether the definition of advocacy indicated in paragraph 12 was the one used in the evaluation; and (b) whether all the components subsumed under that definition were explored in the evaluation. On the first issue, although it was previously implicit that the definition in paragraph 12 was indeed the one used in the evaluation, OIOS has now added text in paragraph 12 to make that fact explicit. (During the report finalization stage, OIOS indicated to OCHA that it would add that text.) On the second issue, OIOS did explore humanitarian principles and humanitarian financing, in accordance with the definition. Relevant references in the report are found in paragraph 12 (d), which explicitly indicates that humanitarian principles were included. Although international humanitarian law is not referenced as a core focus, paragraphs 28 and 48 (a) do indicate that international humanitarian law was included in the evaluation. On humanitarian financing, the OCHA quote in paragraph 9 (supported by the reference in footnote 7) does explicitly mention funding. Accordingly, paragraphs 32, 41 and 48 subsequently mention examples garnered on the country-based pooled funds and the Central Emergency Response Fund.

On the issue of methodological details, OIOS fully agrees with OCHA that word limitations do significantly curtail the amount of technical detail it can feasibly include in the report. OIOS aims to provide sufficient methodological detail to establish the credibility of its analysis with evaluands, members of the Committee on Programme and Coordination and other stakeholders and to convey that its analyses are based on the best evidence available during the course of its evaluation. OIOS did provide OCHA such details in response to its informal comments on the report and offered to provide further details if OCHA wished. It also sought clarification from OCHA on any specific areas of the analysis that required additional methodological detail in order to strengthen the credibility of the analysis from the OCHA standpoint. However, no further requests were forthcoming.

These comments notwithstanding, OIOS is encouraged by the fact that, in its informal comments and in the management response, OCHA has broadly accepted the evaluation's analysis, results statements and recommendations.

United Nations E/AC.51/2017/12

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Committee for Programme and Coordination
Fifty-seventh session
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Substantive session, 5-30 June 2017*
Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda**
Coordination questions: New Partnership for Africa's Development

United Nations system support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of activities undertaken by the United Nations system in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) since June 2016. It is organized around the thematics of the Regional Coordination Mechanism of the United Nations entities working in Africa.

During the reporting period, the United Nations system continued to work towards the implementation of NEPAD, Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably in the contexts of the African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women and the African Year of Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth. In particular, the United Nations system supported the African Union and its subregional institutions in the context of the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) and the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

* The dates for the substantive session are tentative.
** E/AC.51/2017/1.

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The report underlines the need for United Nations entities to enhance coordination and coherence, and calls for mobilizing more resources, enhancing partnerships and improving synergies and coordination in the implementation of all development frameworks in Africa, in particular NEPAD, Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report also advocates for United Nations entities to include in their activities and programmes the African Union theme for 2017: "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth".

I. Introduction

1. At its forty-fifth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to report to the Committee at its forty-sixth session, and annually thereafter, on the support provided by the United Nations system to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (see A/60/16, para. 237). The recommendation was endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 71/6.

II. Support for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

2. The present report highlights activities implemented by the United Nations system in support of NEPAD since June 2016, organized around eight realigned thematic clusters and topics corresponding to the priorities of NEPAD and in line with Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3. The report covers all Regional Coordination Mechanism thematics and was prepared on the basis of inputs received from United Nations systems funds, programmes and specialized agencies and from departments of the Secretariat since June 2016. In requesting inputs, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa highlighted the recommendations of the Committee for Programme Coordination, including the importance of reporting impacts in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

A. Infrastructure development

4. During the review period, the United Nations system continued to support the implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative and the Dakar Agenda for Action.

5. From July 2016 through January 2017, the World Bank committed $3.2 billion to national and regional energy, transport, and information and communications technology (ICT) projects in sub-Saharan Africa, consistent with the objectives of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa. Moreover, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) supported the implementation of the Dakar Agenda for Action in 16 countries by kickstarting "Project 16-16-16", its flagship transboundary infrastructure advocacy campaign. The campaign involved the domestication of the model law on investment in transboundary infrastructure and the development of capacity in de-risking strategies to enhance and deepen project ownership and support across beneficiary countries. The Department of Public Information of the Secretariat supported the campaign by hosting a media breakfast round table at United Nations Headquarters with media outlets and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency under the theme "De-risking Infrastructure Investment in Africa".

6. The United Nations Capital Development Fund's technical assistance support has taken the necessary steps to reduce the risk of financial loss in order to facilitate

a pipeline of some $70 million for private investment. As a result, in the United Republic of Tanzania in 2016, 11 projects reached the investment-ready stage and were presented to local banks, investors and other partners for capital mobilization.

7. In the energy sector, the World Bank, under the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, has been helping countries in determining investments required to meet energy access goals by 2030. Through support to transformative regional energy projects, it promoted the expanded use of renewable energy.

8. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) partnered with Burkina Faso, Chad, the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia to develop national energy investment prospectuses and action agendas to facilitate private sector engagement.

9. Under the project entitled "Promoting Energy Efficiency in Buildings in East Africa", the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) assisted Rwandan building codes by developing a chapter on sustainable energy. That code was subsequently adopted by eight East African universities as a training manual. UN-Habitat also carried out training on entrepreneurial skills for more than 300 participants in Rwanda on energy efficiency and renewable energy for youth empowerment. Similar training was undertaken in Nigeria for more than 100 youths.

10. The Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, UNDP and the United Republic of Tanzania organized a regional meeting on sustainable energy for African least developed countries in Dar es Salaam in December 2016 to build multi-stakeholder partnerships and mobilize investment, including by sharing best practices.

11. In the ICT sector, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), through its project to support the harmonization of ICT policies in sub-Saharan Africa, continued to ensure coherence between African Union and NEPAD enabling policies and regulatory frameworks. To help governments harness broadband networks and service, ITU assisted South African Development Community (SADC) countries in developing their national broadband plans.

12. In the water sector, UN-Habitat, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) partnered with Global Affairs Canada to improve sustainable access to disaster-resilient water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in 265 disaster-prone communities in the upper east, upper west and northern regions of Ghana for 200,000 beneficiaries, a quarter of them schoolchildren.

13. For the second part of its Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation project, UN-Habitat entered into a finance contract worth €13.1 million with the European Investment Bank to deliver more than 300 sanitation facilities to meet the sanitation needs of about 250,000 people, including 150 schools in the slums of Mwanza, United Republic of Tanzania.

14. UN-Habitat has provided technical and legal support, through a revenue enhancement project in Kenya, to design an infrastructure development fund, which is expected to alleviate Kiambu County's current and future infrastructure financing challenges. As a result, the county's revenues have grown by 60 per cent.

B. Governance

15. During the review period, United Nations entities advanced the governance and democracy agenda by supporting the African Peer Review Mechanism. The Mechanism's membership increased to 36 when Namibia acceded to the Mechanism in January 2017. ECA and UNDP assisted Chad, Djibouti, Senegal and the Sudan in drafting their external review reports, and supported Kenya in drafting its second external review report. Those countries were peer reviewed during the January 2017 session of the Forum of the Mechanism. As of January 2017, 21 countries have been peer reviewed.

16. ECA organized a regional meeting for West Africa on regional accession within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It provided technical support to Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya and Liberia to launch effective self-assessment processes. In Liberia, ECA organized three events in October 2016, in close collaboration with the secretariat of the African Peer Review Mechanism and national authorities. As a result, Liberia agreed to finalize the self-assessment exercise by the end of February 2017 and to be reviewed in July 2017 at the Mechanism's next Forum.

17. UNDP provided both technical and financial support for the development of the 2016-2020 strategic plan of the African Peer Review Mechanism. The 5-year plan was approved in August 2016 by the Mechanism's Forum. UNDP also organized a strategic technical meeting to develop a road map for the implementation of the plan and prepared a project proposal to identify funds to support its implementation.

18. The United Nations Democracy Fund funded 33 projects implemented by civil society organizations in several African countries, including a project in Kenya which empowers women and youth living in informal settlements to meaningfully participate in local governance.

19. In collaboration with the Department of Public Information, ECA, the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Agency, the secretariat of the African Peer Review Mechanism and the regional economic communities, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organized several high-level events during Africa Week in October 2016, including on strengthening partnerships for inclusive sustainable development, good governance and peace and stability in Africa, and on a renewed global partnership for entrenching good governance and the rule of law in Africa. The high-level events helped to strengthen international cooperation in support of Agenda 2063, in particular aspiration 3, which calls for "An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect of human rights, justice and the rule of law".

20. UN-Habitat continued to support the mainstreaming of the human rights-based approach to development, particularly in the context of rapid urbanization. It advocated for the participation of women and youth in urban processes, land tenure and property issues; increased accessibility for persons with disabilities; the inclusion of indigenous peoples; and the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing.

21. In Kenya, the revenue enhancement project of UN-Habitat in Kiambu County laid the foundation for municipal financial management. The county's revenues

have grown by 60 per cent since the implementation of the fully automated revenue collection system.

22. Through the implementation review mechanism of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) carried out peer reviews in Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Malawi, Mali, the Niger, Senegal, Seychelles and Swaziland on the criminalization and international cooperation chapters of the Convention. So far, 37 African countries have conducted peer reviews. In 2016, UNODC provided technical assistance to 11 countries to help them implement the recommendations made in their peer reviews and strengthen their governance frameworks.

23. UNDP supported the establishment and implementation of a rule of law and anti-corruption training facility in Senegal for public officials. It also supported various rule of law programmes in Burkina Faso, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and South Sudan.

24. The United Nations Global Compact partnered with its Foundation to launch collective action projects in Egypt, Kenya and Nigeria aimed at helping small and medium-sized enterprises to implement robust anti-corruption compliance programmes and link them with business incentives provided by multinational companies and investors.

25. In May 2016, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) delivered an electronic registration system in Benin which allows the local business registry to automate processes and make them available online. UNCTAD also assisted the Tanzania Investment Centrein installing an online registration system and incorporating an innovative investment opportunities repository, which is also being replicated in Kenya. Kenya expanded its investment portal, called eRegulations Kenya, which is a reference for trade portals in the East African Community.

26. With the view of supporting public institutions and administrations in their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat invited African public servants to capacity-building workshops, conferences, study tours and other capacity development events. The Department also contributed to the formulation of a public administration programme for NEPAD and the African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration.

C. Peace and security

27. To sustain the political momentum for peacebuilding in Africa and discuss effective ways to implement the outcome of the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the African Union Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office co-organized a high-level meeting entitled "Sustaining peace: mechanisms, partnerships and the future of peacebuilding in Africa" in May 2016. The meeting outlined proposals for strengthening peacebuilding partnerships among the United Nations and the African Union, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the regional economic

communities, and called for adequate and predictable financing for peacebuilding and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund.

28. As a follow-up, my predecessor, with the support of the Governments of Kenya, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, held a Peacebuilding Fund pledging conference to invest in sustaining peace on 21 September 2016, on the margins of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. The Fund received $151 million in pledges from 26 Member States, covering the years 2017-2019, which will go towards projects aimed at sustaining peace and preventing violent conflict, particularly in Africa.

29. Through its regional offices, the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat continued to combat threats of terrorism and violent extremism arising from the activities of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. In August 2016, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) held meetings with authorities from Cameroon and Chad to promote a holistic approach to the threat posed by Boko Haram. UNOCA organized a visit by the Bureau of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa to Cameroon and Chad in November 2016 to raise awareness among member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) about the need to combat Boko Haram. In March 2017, the Department facilitated a visit by the Security Council to the Lake Chad Basin countries to express solidarity with the region, take stock of the situation and consult on efforts to address the humanitarian and human rights situation and the root causes underlying the Boko Haram crisis.

30. In June 2016, UNOCA and ECCAS signed a new cooperation framework agreement that outlines the principles of cooperation in the areas of preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding and provides a basis for a range of actions, including capacity-building workshops, joint situation assessment missions and joint analytical reports. In collaboration with the African Union and ECOWAS, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) was engaged in a number of preventive and good offices initiatives in Burkina Faso, the Gambia and Ghana. UNOWAS continued to facilitate the implementation of the cross-border security strategy of the Mano River Union. In October and November 2016, a UNOWAS delegation visited Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia to explore ways of advancing implementation of the cross-border security strategy, including by identifying priority activities which UNOWAS and the respective United Nations country teams could help sustain after the drawdown of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

31. In Eastern Africa, UNODC continued to counter violent extremism in prisons and provide legislative assistance to incorporate counter-terrorism provisions and training to prosecutors and judges, while focusing on human rights and the criminal justice response to terrorism in the region and supporting the development of a regional prosecutor's network on mutual legal assistance, extradition and prisoner transfer laws. UNDP fostered community resilience and inclusion, supported the creation of early warning capacities at regional and national levels and strengthened the developmental response to extremism and radicalization in Cameroon, Chad, Kenya, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria and Somalia. UNDP also operationalized national

infrastructures for peace and developed strategies on conflict prevention and reconciliation.

32. UNICEF provided critical child protection services to children and women affected by crises in South Sudan, where it deployed 19 integrated rapid response mechanism missions, reaching more than 309,000 people, including more than 58,000 children under the age of 5. UNICEF also supported the release of 845 children associated with armed forces with an inclusive reintegration package and supported survivors of gender-based violence.

33. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict worked with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-North to sign an action plan in November 2016 to end the recruitment and use of children in conflict. Similarly, in Somalia, the Office's joint efforts with the United Nations country team led to the transfer to child protection partners of 43 children who were detained for their alleged association with Al-Shabaab.

D. Agriculture, food security and rural development

34. In line with the Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063 in 2015, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) worked to enhance women's contributions to and benefits from formal agriculture and agribusiness value chains. In that regard, FAO supported the development of 39 country gender assessments, providing the basis for gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme results framework and targets.

35. In support of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, World Bank lending for agriculture to sub-Saharan African countries from July 2016 to January 2017 amounted to $1.2 billion. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), through its support to the African Green Revolution Forum, helped stimulate increased public and private sector investments in African agriculture towards achieving the commitments of the Malabo Declaration and the Programme.

36. IFAD has contributed about $243,000 to the Platform for Agricultural Risk Management to implement activities in Ethiopia, Mozambique, the Niger and Uganda that focus on integrating holistic approaches to agricultural risk management into national plans and policies. National risk assessment workshops were held in Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Ethiopia, the Niger, Senegal and Uganda.

37. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), through an atoms monitoring technology, has been assisting small-scale farmers in adapting to climate change and improving crop productivity in the arid Kassala region of the Sudan. After a successful pilot project, IAEA, FAO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Sudanese Red Crescent Society scaled up the technology, which is currently used by more than 2,000 farmers in the region, half of whom are women, who are now benefiting from a combination of drip irrigation and stable isotope techniques to grow vegetables more effectively.

38. FAO, under the initiative entitled "Africa's Commitment to End Hunger by 2025", has been supporting nutrition and food security sensitive agriculture and

gender mainstreaming, as well as the development of regional and national agricultural investment plans. As a result, and in collaboration with SADC, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and ECOWAS, the countries of Angola, Chad, the Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Togo enhanced their food security and nutrition policies and aligned their investment plans with the aspirations of the Malabo Declaration.

39. IFAD, under the Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa of Japan, supported the implementation of food and nutrition security policies through a multisectoral and people-centred approach. As a result, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, the Sudan, South Sudan and Zimbabwe aligned their country strategies and investments to goals of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.

40. UNCTAD, under its project to build the capacities of selected least developed countries to upgrade and diversify their fish exports, held a second workshop in October 2016 in Entebbe, Uganda, to check the accuracy of its manual on upgrading and diversifying the country's fish exports. Some 116 Ugandan exports and senior officials, as well as fishermen and -women, received training in international food safety and quality standards, export diversification and aquaculture.

41. ILO supported the NEPAD Agency in its organization of the second Africa Rural Development Forum in September 2016 under the theme "Transforming Africa's rural space through youth empowerment, job creation and skills development". The Forum endorsed a blueprint to implement rural development policies in Africa as a vehicle for advancing rural transformation across Africa and accelerating the pace towards the vision of Agenda 2063.

42. UN-Habitat partnered with IFAD to enhance knowledge and awareness of land and natural resource tenure issues, and measures for strengthening the tenure security of more than 5,800 farmers in Uganda and more than 600 farmers in Kenya.

43. The Common Fund for Commodities has been working to empower smallholder producer schemes for a sustainable cocoa/coffee economy in Cameroon in partnership with the African Cocoa & Coffee Farmers' Marketing Organization. The project aims to enhance the profitability of cocoa/coffee cooperatives in Cameroon in addition to carrying out training and capacity-building related to cost-efficient production of coffee and cocoa by smallholder farmers. The first year the Organization will empower 20 cooperatives, including 15,000 farmers, and production yields are expected to be 31,000 tons of cocoa and 20,000 tons of coffee.

E. Industry, trade and market access

44. UNIDO, ECA, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, FAO, the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, UNCTAD, UNDP and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) have partnered to implement a key priority of the President of the Economic and Social Council. That priority emphasizes the importance of innovations in infrastructure development and promoting sustainable industrialization in countries

in special situations, particularly in Africa. In March 2017, those United Nations entities organized two regional meetings at the expert and ministerial levels on industrialization and infrastructure in Dakar. The meetings advocated for innovative concepts of industrialization to provide sustainable growth in Africa.

45. ECA, UNCTAD and the World Trade Organization (WTO) supported the negotiations on the Continental Free Trade Area. While WTO extended support to the African Union office in Geneva, ECA and UNCTAD supported all three negotiation sessions and the four technical meetings led by ECA and the African Union Commission to prepare draft legal texts. As a result, a draft negotiating text was prepared for the consideration of States to enable them to consult national stakeholders and inform the work of the negotiation forum on the Continental Free Trade Area.

46. UNCTAD provided training on trade in services for senior officials in ECOWAS member States in Abuja in July 2016. A services policy review for ECOWAS has also been initiated to help support the deepening of regional integration and Continental Free Trade Area negotiations. In support of the Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement between COMESA, the East African Community and SADC, UNCTAD provided technical support on services and tariffs negotiations.

47. ECA trained African officials in Dakar in November 2016 on how to formulate suitable evidence-based trade policies. WTO strengthened the capacity of African countries through 109 activities covering the whole spectrum of the WTO work programme. Up to December 2016, approximately 4,000 African participants completed various online courses through the WTO iLearn*ing*.

48. The International Trade Centre (ITC) enhanced the export competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises from Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia in selected regional agrifood value chains. To bring investments and/or know-how, ITC brokered partnerships with multinational companies such as the Parodi Group, based in Argentina, and the German electronics firm Bosch. In Zambia, that catalysed sales of $300,000 worth of honey from small and medium-sized enterprises in the Parodi Group. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the newly established packaging services centre for small and medium-sized enterprises at the Small Industries Development Organization enabled small firms to access high-quality packaging which, in turn, translated to better market positioning.

49. The Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and WTO convened a meeting on the theme of harnessing the trade potential of landlocked developing countries to implement the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Geneva in June 2016. The meeting resulted in the adoption of a declaration highlighting the need for increased focus on physical infrastructure development and on soft infrastructure, particularly trade facilitation.

50. The UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data programme organized a series of capacity-building training sessions on the customs management system for national customs administrations and revenue authorities. Those efforts assisted the

long-term sustainability of the Automated System and enhanced the capacity of 37 African countries to increase revenue collection and reduce clearing times and costs.

51. UNCTAD continued to build awareness and skills in African countries on non-tariff measures, and conducted, with the support of Finland, the One United Nations Fund for the United Republic of Tanzania and the Russian Federation, an online course on economic analysis of non-tariff measures from October to December 2016. Twenty-three participants from 18 African countries took part in the course.

52. In 2016, the Standards and Trade Development Facility continued to promote compliance with international food safety, animal and plant health standards and facilitate market access in Africa through five regional projects.

53. The International Monetary Fund approved a $12 billion arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility for Egypt to support an economic reform programme and focus on growth and development. Similarly, a 48-month programme of about $2.9 billion was approved for Tunisia in 2016 to support economic and financial reforms and generate inclusive growth and job creation, as well as governance, infrastructure and human capital development.

54. UNCTAD supported the Central African Republic, the Sudan and Togo in improving debt recording, and Gabon and the Sudan in producing debt data validation calendars. UNCTAD also assisted Angola and Côte d'Ivoire in developing their national debt statistics. In total, UNCTAD contributed to enhanced debt management capacity for 22 African countries.

F. Environment, population and urbanization

55. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), as the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, continued to work with other partners to support the implementation of the decisions of the Conference and the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD. Towards that end, the Conference convened an African regional joint preparatory meeting for the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification, which served to consolidate common views and develop frameworks for discussions after the Conferences concluded.

56. UNEP and a number of United Nations entities, the NEPAD Agency and the regional economic communities jointly prepared assessment reports to identify the opportunities and challenges involved in transitioning to a green economy in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa. The assessments identified the challenges to the respective countries including financing, capacity-building and technology transfer.

57. UNCTAD continued to promote climate-friendly trade and production strategies, including in the green economy. National green economy review projects were undertaken in Ethiopia, Madagascar, Morocco and Senegal to advise the development of national green economy issues in order to promote new employment and export opportunities while preserving ecosystem development.

58. The United Nations Capital Development Fund supported the integration of climate change adaptation into local government planning and budgeting systems in 14 local governments in Benin, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique and the Niger in 2016. That allowed local governments with populations close to 1 million to access climate finance.

59. UNDP strengthened national capacities to mobilize additional and innovative forms of public and private finance for climate change in 12 African countries, including Burkina Faso, the Comoros, Eritrea, the Gambia, Madagascar, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Some of the targeted support provided to countries included: (a) access to the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund and other climate funds; (b) the establishment of national mechanisms for climate financing through national climate change [illegible]; (c) technical assistance in [illegible] and aligned climate public expenditure and institutional reviews and supporting implementation in targeted countries; and (d) the development of the capacities of targeted countries to scale up renewable and green energy initiatives.

60. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and its Global [illegible] supported capacity-building in 40 African countries to help set land and degradation neutrality targets through grants and technical assistance amounting to $1.9 million. The Global Mechanism also continued supporting the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative through two projects: (a) the Front line environmental post one Union verte (FLEUVE) project, funded by the European Commission and covering Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, the Niger and Senegal, amounting to €7.75 million, and (b) the project entitled "West Africa: Promoting sustainable land management in migration-prone areas through innovative financing mechanisms", funded by Italy and implemented in Burkina Faso, the Niger and Senegal, amounting to €2 million.

61. World Bank support for the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative continued through the Sahel and West Africa Programme, reinforced by the Building Resilience through Innovation, Communication and Knowledge Service project. Lending for environment, land and water management projects from July 2016 through January 2017 was more than $900 million.

62. UN-Habitat continued to facilitate the development and mainstreaming of an African urban and human settlement agenda. It conceived the idea of and helped set up the Conference of the ministers responsible for Housing and Urban Development and Secretary-Generals of the Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization of the African Union. UN-Habitat provided technical and administrative support to the Committee to facilitate its participation in the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III process) and a separate [illegible] African Common Position and a draft [illegible] Declaration on Habitat III, a Strategy, 2016–2018, draft of which was endorsed by the African Heads of State in August 2016.

63. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), UN-Habitat and the African Union Commission organized a high-level meeting on the theme "Urban agenda and the Africa we want" in March 2017 in the margins of African Development Bank 2017 "Re-thinking cultural ties: a significant tie for Urban

Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. In June 2016, ECA organized a high-level dialogue on the impact of urbanization on national development planning in Africa in Yaoundé to encourage African countries to mainstream urbanization into their development planning and strategies.

66. UN-Habitat has been advocating for the placement of housing and slum upgrading at the centre of urban decision-making by providing technical support to 27 African countries. Nine of those countries are currently implementing participatory pilot projects under the framework of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme. Some 67,500 slum households are targeted for improved housing conditions.

67. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs and ECA organized two workshops, one on the production of population estimates and demographic indicators and one on population projections. The workshops, held in Addis Ababa and Dakar in March and November 2016, respectively, strengthened the capacity of African national statistical offices.

68. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continued to support national demographic dividend strategies and expanded support to address policy actions and adoption of national and subnational needs. UNFPA provided technical and financial support to model the prospects for a demographic transition and a demographic dividend in 12 countries in the Sahel region using National Transfer Accounts. At a result, many governments recognized the development potential of current demographic trajectories and the urgency of better schooling and expanded job opportunities.

G. Social and human development

69. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs continued to promote the social dimensions of HIV/AIDS and assess current system-wide processes related to social development in Africa, including by raising awareness about Agenda 2063 at the Commission for Social Development of the Economic and Social Council.

70. The World Bank provided lending and commitments for social and human development from July 2016 to January 2017 in excess of $4.3 billion, covering health, education and social protection projects.

71. [illegible] pooling together the collective strengths and distinct capacities of its United Nations agencies, comprising the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), WHO and the World Bank, supported Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe in improving the [illegible] health and well-being of every woman, newborn, child and adolescent, support of the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health and the Every Woman, Every Child initiative.

72. UNFPA supported the work of about 30,000 health workers, strengthened the capacity of 13 nursing schools, improved reproductive maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and improved the availability, quality and

monitoring of integrated reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health services and referral systems in sub-Saharan Africa. It also led the United Nations system's Campaign to End Fistula, and has been piloting a statistical model to generate global and country-specific estimates of fistula incidence and prevalence to help advance planning, implementation and monitoring.

71. ITU and WHO have been carrying out the Be Healthy, Be Mobile initiative in Senegal from 2014 to 2017, which takes advantage of mobile phone usage in order to respond to non-communicable diseases such as diabetes in the areas of prevention, treatment and policy enforcement, and to target specific disease risk factors. By the end of 2016, the project had registered about 53,000 subscribers. Similarly, in October 2016, ITU and WHO launched the Be Healthy, Be Mobile: Cervical Cancer initiative in Zambia through a grant agreement from WHO and AfDB. The initiative's goal will be to take advantage of the high rates of mobile phone penetration all over the world to deliver health services to populations.

72. In July 2016, the landmark Nairobi Statement on Investment in Access to Medicines was signed by the African Union, UNAIDS and UNCTAD, among others, in Nairobi, to facilitate investment in local pharmaceutical production in Africa, particularly in the manufacture of antiretroviral medicines.

73. UNICEF strengthened engagement with regional bodies such as IGAD, SADC and the Southern Africa Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee, including through the deployment of key personnel, contributing to both the cholera response plan led by IGAD and the Joint Cholera Initiative for Southern Africa. In the education area, through its Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme, UNICEF supported the Pan-African Symposium on Education, Resilience and Social Cohesion in June 2016. As a result, 14 African countries committed to ensure that their education systems offer equitable, socially inclusive and quality education that promotes social cohesion, resilience and peace. The event also contributed to preparations for the Association for the Development of Education in Africa 2017 Triennale on the theme "Revitalizing education towards the 2030 Global Agenda and Africa's Agenda 2063".

74. The UNCTAD Virtual Institute continued to help strengthen trade and development-related teaching and research at academic institutions through online courses and videoconferences in Africa. In 2016, six universities in Africa joined the Virtual Institute, making Africa the region with the highest country representation.

75. ILO and the African Union Commission organized the first Labour Market Statistics and Analysis Academy in Africa in Yaoundé(sic) in October and November 2016, as the first course of the African Centre for Statistics, in order to strengthen the statistical capacity of African countries.

76. The United Nations Global Compact and its local networks in Egypt, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania organized consultations on the Women's Empowerment Principles gap analysis tool in July and August 2016 to assist companies in assessing and improving their gender equality performance across the workplace, marketplace and community.

77. The United Nations Capital Development Fund, under the Making Access Possible initiative, supported national governments on financial services to

Botswana, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Togo and Zimbabwe. That contributed to supporting market integration, local economic expansion and sustainable development.

78. In South Africa, ILO organized an Academy on Labour Migration in December 2016, which provided advanced knowledge and enhanced the capacity of key migration actors to better understand labour migration challenges and opportunities in a changing political, economic and social context.

II. Science and technology

79. ITU continued to advocate for Africa's development by leveraging ICT access and facilitating the mobilization of technical, human and financial resources needed for its implementation, and working towards narrowing the digital divide by promoting the right of everyone to communicate through cost-effective access to infrastructure and ICT services.

80. ITU organized the second annual sub-Sahara Spectrum Management Conference and a workshop on digital broadcasting funding mechanisms in November 2016 in Dakar. The event, attended by 30 countries, was part of ITU support to Africa, through the African Telecommunications Union, in the migration from analogue to digital broadcasting.

81. ITU continued to establish Centres of Excellence in Africa as key vehicles to deliver ITU Academy courses for capacity-building and meet the WSIS+10 objective of combating digital illiteracy. ITU also organized capacity-building forums in 13 countries in Africa.

82. During the reporting period, WIPO worked with the WIPO Agency on a project on intellectual property and the informal economy to better understand how innovation occurs in the informal economy. As part of its capacity-building activities, WIPO also established Technology and Innovation Support Centres in Djibouti and Mauritania in May and July 2016, respectively. It also signed service level agreements for the Centres with both countries in October 2016.

83. UNCTAD conducted training sessions and workshops on intellectual property in various African countries. That included a workshop on intellectual property and technology transfer which took place in May in Benin, in collaboration with UNIDO and South Africa. UNCTAD organized a workshop in Pretoria for the review and validation of a draft consultative framework on intellectual property in South Africa.

84. In line with its support for the development of science, technology and innovation capacities, UNCTAD conducted, at the request of the Economic Ministry of Trade, Industry and East African Community Affairs, a policy review in Rwanda.

85. The Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in accordance to its follow-up to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2011-2020, facilitated the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 71/243, by which the Assembly established the Technology

Bank for the Least Developed Countries. The new United Nations conference is a significant achievement for the development of science, technology and innovation for least developed countries and will be supported by the relevant entities of the United Nations system, including the Technology Facilitation Mechanism for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

I. Communication, advocacy and outreach

86. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa continued to support the achievement of internationally agreed development goals through coordinating global advocacy in support of NEPAD, under the institutional framework of the Interdepartmental Task Force on African Affairs and through the Office website (http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/), which has been revamped and updated in French. The Office continued to coordinate the United Nations system-wide support for NEPAD, with a view to ensuring coherent and coordinated United Nations support for Africa.

87. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa partnered with African Union strategic partners to sensitize and raise the awareness of the international community and the United Nations system on the priorities of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a view to promoting their coordinated synergistic implementation. In that context, the Office, the African Union Commission and the Government of Sweden organized a high-level forum on the theme "The Africa we want in 2030, 2063 and beyond". The forum raised global awareness of the synergies between both agendas and stressed the importance of partnerships to support their implementation.

88. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and its regional economic communities, ECA, the NEPAD Agency, the secretariat of the African Peer Review Mechanism and the Department of Public Information, organized Africa Week in October 2016, under the theme "Strengthening partnerships for inclusive sustainable development, good governance, peace and stability in Africa". The Department of Public Information provided live [illegible] and regular updates of the high-level events through its social media platforms and various media activities, including interviews and a media briefing with United Nations and African Union officials to publicize events marking Africa Week 2016. The high-level events led into and enriched the debate of the General Assembly on the development of Africa.

89. The Department of Public Information used an array of public information platforms and tools, including its Africa thematic magazine, its multilingual news platforms and its social media accounts to promote public awareness of NEPAD objectives. The Department strengthened its public awareness programmes related to Africa, focusing on development achievements and challenges and the results of the African Union's partnership with the United Nations, in particular on Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change. As a result, from [illegible] to December 2016, 89 original articles published in the print and online versions of Africa Renewal were republished in English and French more than 500 times, in nearly 120 media outlet worldwide.

90. In May 2016, the Department of Public Information supported the African Union Directorate of Information and Communications in the production and publication of a newsletter focused on women's rights and human rights, which was circulated during the African Union Summit in Rwanda in July.

91. The United Nations Democracy Fund's website published news articles focused on getting more women in parliament in Somalia, on building literacy and participation among women and youth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and on promoting youth political participation in Morocco.

92. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction built momentum on disaster risk reduction awareness and advocacy through events such as the International Day for Disaster Reduction, held in October 2016, on the theme, "Live to tell: raising awareness, reducing mortality", which focused on the first target of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which pertains to reducing disaster mortality. The first World Tsunami Awareness Day focused on effective education and disaster drills. The Office also partnered with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and highlighted the role played by radios in disseminating disaster risk reduction knowledge and early warning messages.

III. Policy issues in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

A. Strengthening of the cluster system and enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union

93. During the reporting period, the United Nations system realigned its cluster system in line with NEPAD, Agenda 2063 and the Africa-specific approach to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In April 2016, the seventeenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism-Africa decided that issues of peace, security, governance and human rights would be addressed through reporting at its annual forum, and not within the cluster system. Considering the convergence between Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the session stressed the need for joint implementation and monitoring by the United Nations system, the African Union, the regional economic communities and other institutions working in and on Africa.

94. Regarding cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/254 of 23 December 2016, entitled "Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda 2063: 2017-2027". The framework is anchored on and aligned to the aspirations and goals of Agenda 2063, and supports the decisions and declarations made during the twenty-seventh African Union Summit held in Kigali in July 2016.

B. Support to the mobilization of financial resources for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

95. The United Nations system continued to support the mobilization of financial resources for the implementation of NEPAD.

96. During Africa Week 2016, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, together with the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Agency and the Department of Public Information, organized several high-level events on ways to strengthen partnerships to galvanize international support for Africa's transformational agenda. The events focused on leveraging partnerships for the effective implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 in Africa. Consequently, Africa's traditional and new and emerging development partners, including Brazil, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Turkey, the United States of America, the Arab League and the European Union, committed to strengthening North-South, South-South and triangular partnerships in support of the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

97. The World Bank's combined International Development Association and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development delivery to sub-Saharan Africa was $9.4 billion for fiscal year 2016, while $3.4 billion of International Bank for Reconstruction and Development assistance was provided to North Africa. The International Finance Corporation committed $3.2 billion in new long-term financing and mobilizations in sub-Saharan Africa, advised governments and private investors in projects worth $63 million in 37 countries and committed $370 million to North African countries. The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency provided guarantees of $1.8 billion to countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Anticipated lending to sub-Saharan Africa in fiscal year 2017 is $9.3 billion through the International Development Association and $1.4 billion through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. In 2016, UNDP support to the African Peer Review Mechanism was about $134,000. UNDP also provided $2.0 million to the African Union to support women's economic empowerment and development initiatives in Africa.

98. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa leveraged the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development to translate commitments into concrete action through mutual accountability between African countries and their development partners. The biennial report of the Secretary-General on the review of the implementation of the commitments made towards Africa's development (A/71/203), issued in July 2016, monitored 13 commitments in the areas of trade, infrastructure development, gender and women's empowerment and a conflict-free Africa. The report identified gaps and challenges in the implementation of commitments and called for strengthening support through partnerships and mutual accountability between African Member States and their development partners.

99. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through its support to the Development Cooperation Forum, contributed to the development of a working definition of development cooperation that goes beyond the transfer of resources to include non-financial measures and actions, and emphasizes that the allocation of

official development assistance and climate change-related development cooperation must be more sensitive to the needs of the most vulnerable countries.

C. Cross-cutting issues

100. Through the 16 established Empretec programme centres in Africa, UNCTAD trained several African women entrepreneurs who were recognized during the Empretec Women in Business Awards ceremony held in Nairobi in July 2016.

101. In July 2016, at the fourteenth session of UNCTAD in Nairobi, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and UNCTAD organized a high-level panel discussion on promoting tourism as an engine of inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa. The panel stressed the role of tourism for sustainable development in Africa and identified recommendations to promote tourism in Africa. In the context of its Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty initiative, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) launched eco-tourism initiatives and enhanced market access, vocational training and small and medium-sized enterprise development projects in Cameroon, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Most of those projects included components to enhance the participation of women and youth.

102. UNCTAD also developed a teaching package on trade and gender. A total of 131 participants from 21 African countries received scholarships to participate in the third iteration of that online course in January and February 2017. The distance learning initiative aims to equip academics, government officials and civil society in developing countries and economies in transition with analytical tools to analyse the two-way relationship between trade and gender, and to produce policy recommendations that take gender into account. UNCTAD and UN-Women developed an abridged version of the course for a less specialized audience. Launched in October 2016, the four-hour online course, "Trade and gender equality", is the latest addition to the UN-Women "I know gender" course.

103. UN-Habitat has made significant progress in promoting pro-poor and pro-gender responsive land administration. In 2016, it trained around 600 participants on innovative land administration approaches, including in conflict and post-conflict settings and in the management of land and natural resources and tenure security, using various Global Land Tool Network tools and geospatial technologies.

104. The Enhanced Integrated Framework provided tailored support to 38 African countries through a unique approach that guarantees full ownership, including the co-financing of Framework projects by host developed countries. In its first phase, the Framework provided support to 102 projects, with a total allocation of $200.98 million. Although they are on a very limited scale, the projects have helped to create the kinds of jobs that lift people, particularly women and youth, out of poverty.

105. In June 2016 at United Nations Headquarters in New York, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organized a high-level meeting entitled "Women and youth entrepreneurship in Africa: the impact of entrepreneurial education on development". The event identified ways to support and sustain women and youth entrepreneurship in Africa. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the

Office organized a break-out session on Africa during the 2017 Economic and Social Council Youth Forum to emphasize the role of African youths in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063.

106. UNICEF continued to implement an effective programme on ending violence against children, with significant progress in Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, as well as in Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland. Additional investments were made in programmes to reduce incidences of child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting. Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia have conducted assessments and studies on the drivers of child marriage to inform programming.

107. In line with the theme "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth", adopted by the African Union Summit for 2017, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction promoted the engagement of youth in disaster risk reduction. As a result, the Office created an African disaster risk reduction youth group, ensured that a youth representative become a regular member of the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction and advocated for youth leadership as a guiding principle in its programme of action.

D. Institutional support

108. IOM has been supporting the African Union Commission and NEPAD in the establishment of an African centre for best practices, capacity development and South-South cooperation as a global platform to showcase "African homegrown development solutions" and best practices in Angola, Chad, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, the Niger and Rwanda.

109. The World Bank has been managing the multi-donor TerrAfrica Leveraging Fund, which has $2.0 million dedicated until the end of March 2018 for strengthening the capacity of the NEPAD Agency in the fields of advocacy, mutual learning and resource mobilization.

110. ECA provided technical support to African countries to align national plans with Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNDP continued to collaborate with the African Union in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 through two regional workshops organized in Johannesburg, South Africa, and Dakar in June 2016, which brought 51 African countries together to strategize on the implementation of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda at the country level.

111. The NEPAD Agency and UNWTO signed a memorandum of understanding in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in April 2016, to promote tourism as a tool for development in Africa within the context of the vision of NEPAD and the aspirations and goals of Agenda 2063.

E. Challenges and constraints

112. Resource constraints, weak inter-cluster collaboration and communication and the lack of a effective monitoring and evaluation framework remain major

challenges to the full implementation of the business plans of the clusters and capacity-building support. Ongoing efforts should seek to allocate specific budget lines for the activities of the respective clusters and all efforts should be made to ensure inter-cluster collaboration and communication.

113. The operationalization of the realigned cluster system will require enhanced coordination in order to support the joint implementation and monitoring of NEPAD, Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

114. This is my first report as Secretary-General on United Nations system support to NEPAD. The United Nations system has profound solidarity with and respect for the aspirations of the African Union, as articulated in Agenda 2063, and is a proud partner in support of the implementation of its priorities, together with the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

115. The United Nations system has continued to provide substantial support to the priority areas of the African Union and NEPAD at both the global and regional levels, through funding programmes and projects on capacity- and institution-building, by providing policy advisory services and by supporting resource mobilization efforts through global advocacy.

116. During the seventeenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism-Africa, clusters were realigned according to the priorities of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations systems' increased partnership with the African Union Commission should therefore look into ways to effectively operationalize those clusters and realign their programmes and activities according to the priorities laid out in the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027. As a priority, the United Nations system should support the African Union and its member States in domesticating and mainstreaming both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda at the regional, national and local levels.

117. The United Nations system should also leverage multi-stakeholder partnerships to support the effective implementation of both regional and global agendas, particularly through United Nations country teams, which are currently being mobilized to effectively match up shared global strategies with the vision of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

118. The United Nations system should support the implementation and monitoring of Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2014-2023) at the strategic and operational levels through harmonization with subregional and regional architectures in Africa, including through the eight regional economic communities, the NEPAD Agency, the secretariat of the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Peace and Security Architecture, the African Governance Architecture and the Panel of the Wise.

119. The United Nations system should enhance its strategic partnership for the promotion of good governance, peace, security and stability, the rule of law and respect for human rights in Africa, notably by supporting the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Union master road map on practical steps to silence the

guns in Africa by the year 2020, the African Union's principle on unconstitutional changes of government and the African Union's goal to eliminate all types of trafficking of persons, including migrants.

120. The United Nations system should enhance its support in order to strengthen national institutions so that they are able to maintain the rule of law, ensure accountability, promote good governance, facilitate the peaceful transition of power and prevent violent extremism. The United Nations system should work to step up efforts to provide more systematic counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to help address the broader challenge of preventing violent extremism.

121. The United Nations system should also support the development and implementation of domestic resource mobilization strategies to promote the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and support efforts through the Security Council for predictable, reliable and sustainable financing for African Union peace operations.

122. In support of the African Union theme of 2017, "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth", the United Nations system should strengthen its coordination and enhance its support for the implementation of all commitments relating to youth, particularly by investing in education, training and decent work, and by engaging young people in shaping their own future.

123. The United Nations system should support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Africa, adopted in October 2016 at the Habitat III Conference, within its overall implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

124. The United Nations system should continue to support regional integration, the fast-tracking of the Continental Free Trade Area, the implementation of the trade facilitation agreement and projects under the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, with particular attention to renewable energy and transport networks.

125. In order to encourage diversification, value addition and the integration of the global value chain within the framework of inclusive and sustainable industrial development, the United Nations system should continue to enhance its support for the development of productive capacity in Africa, notably by developing a commodity strategy, in line with the recently declared Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (2016-2025).

126. The United Nations system should strengthen its support towards addressing climate change in Africa, in particular through the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative and by prioritizing adaptation and mitigation through the Africa Adaptation Initiative. The United Nations system should also support the development of skills, technology advancement, including outer space technology, and the provision of financial and technical resources for climate research.

127. With a view to ensuring environmental sustainability, nutrition and food security, the United Nations system should enhance its support for the implementation of all the pillars of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, in particular in the areas of food security, rural development, agribusiness and climate-smart agriculture.